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OR, The TARNISHED NAME.

A Romance of Execration, Expatriation,
Expiation, and Exalted Honor.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "THE BUCCANEER MIDSHIPMAN,"
"THE ROYAL MIDDY," "THE SEA
RAIDER," "MERLE, THE
MIDDY," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A MIDNIGHT VISITOR.

THE howling winds and waves, sweeping against the rocky coast of Ireland, fairly shook a large old pile of stones known for centuries as Castle Kenmore, and the home of the noble family of Cassidy from time unknown.

KATHLEEN, PALE, DETERMINED, FULL OF NERVE, STEERED SUPERBLY.

Within the castle all was cheerfulness and comfort in the habitable wing overlooking the bay, which was its harbor, and swept out into the sea beyond.

The master, Lord Crayon Cassidy, a man of about two-score years and ten, gray-haired, stern-faced, and upright as a soldier, sat in his large library, on the vast hearth of which blazed a cheery fire.

His books were around him, and the walls were hung with trophies of war and the chase, with here and there the full armor of some old ancestor, standing like a grim sentinel in the home of his youth.

A decanter of Irish whisky, a taper burning under a brass kettle, a sugar-bowl and large silver mug stood at the elbow of Lord Crayon Cassidy, while a pipe and tobacco were within reach.

The mail had arrived that day, and Lord Cassidy was reading over and over again a letter just received.

It was mailed in Queenstown, and its contents had brought a troubled look to the face of the noble.

The letter was as follows:

"ON BOARD
"SCHOONER SEA IMP,
"OFF QUEENSTOWN."

"LORD CASSIDY, OF

"CASTLE KENMORE:—

"One night of storm, long years ago, a vessel was driven a wreck upon your coast.

"Your beautiful wife, the Lady Lenore, had just given birth to a baby girl, and the mother lay at the point of death, as you all believed.

"The Lords of Kenmore are under a vow never to marry but once, and believing that your wife would die, and you have no male heir to Kenmore's vast estates and noble title, you found among the shipwrecked crew an infant child, a boy, whose mother was nearer dead than alive when she was thrown upon the beach.

"That child you took from its mother's arms, and hastening to the castle, exchanged it for your little daughter, two persons alone, other than yourself knowing of the act.

"Your wife recovered, and afterward bore you a son, but the first, the little stranger, is now heir to Kenmore and its title.

"The mother, whose child you took, went her way, she too not dying as it was believed she would, and your child, the little baby girl, has been reared with no knowledge of the secret of her birth.

"I possess your secret, and within a short while I will drop anchor in your little harbor of Kenmore, and come to visit the noble lord of the castle, for I have something to say to you.

"You will see from my letter that I write on board a craft well known and dreaded as a Free Flag Rover of the Seas, and you will understand that the brand of outlawry is upon me, a price upon my head, when I sign myself,

"Your obedient servant,
"ORLANDO,
"The Ocean Free Flag."

The Lord of Kenmore had read this letter over and over again, and each time that he did so his face grew darker, his look more troubled.

At last he arose and began to pace the floor, the letter in his hands, which were clasped behind his back.

"And he will dare come here?" he mused aloud, after awhile.

"By Heaven, if he does, I will cut him down in his tracks, and thus hide forever his accursed secret.

"But he says that two others know. Who can the other one be?

"And the little baby girl has been reared in ignorance of her birth?

"Ah me! she is a woman now almost, for she is nineteen, for such is his age.

"How strange that I should love him more than my real flesh and blood, my son Colton—the real Lord of Kenmore when I am gone.

"Were Lady Kathleen to know this dread secret it would put her in her grave, for she, too, is wrapped up, heart and soul, in the stranger boy, Crayon, while our own son, Colton, will not let us love him as the other does.

"But, Lady Kathleen must never know, and I only hope that this accursed pirate will call and make his demands upon me before my wife returns from London.

"Hark! how the wind howls! And the waves beating upon the rocks fairly shake the old castle to its foundation.

"What a fearful night at sea—ha! what is it, Terry?" and Lord Cassidy turned to a servant in livery who just then entered the library.

"Sure, sir, black and beastly as the night is, a cruiser has dropped anchor in the bay, forinst the castle, yer lordship, and a gentleman in the king's uniform begs to see yer lordship."

"Ah! a vessel has run in on such a night?

Then she had a bold pilot indeed. Where is the officer, Terry?"

"Layin' aside his traps, sir, in the grand sea hall before the fire, sir."

"Admit him at once, and bring an extra mug and fill the urn, and have some refreshments brought also, Terry, and don't forget to replenish the decanter."

"I'll do it, your lordship, at once."

Terry grasped the decanter, which was about a third full, and, once out of the library, put it to his lips and drained the last drop.

Soon after he re-entered, ushering into the library the midnight visitor, and followed by the butler with a replenished decanter, refreshments and a fresh pipe.

The stranger was a tall, slender man, with bronzed face, piercing eyes, and in the full uniform of a captain of the royal navy.

He bowed with courtly grace as Lord Cassidy advanced to meet him, and said:

"My Lord of Kenmore, permit me to introduce myself as Captain Orlando!"

CHAPTER II.

THE OCEAN FREE FLAG.

THE start of their master, when the stranger gave his name as "Captain Orlando," both the butler and Terry saw, which his lordship observing he hastily said:

"Indeed, this is a surprise to have a visit from the renowned Captain Orlando."

So Terry and the butler saw nothing more to surprise their master and took their leave.

The butler went on his way, while Terry, with some excuse, returned, not to the room, but to the door, where he knelt outside.

What Lord Cassidy would have said the visitor checked by placing his finger upon his lips.

Then he stepped quickly to the door, turned the knob and throwing it open sent Terry's prawning upon the floor.

"See here, my man, had I wished to see you, I would not have asked for his lordship, and if I hear a sound in this hallway, unless you are called, I will fire through the door," and the stranger drew a pistol from his belt.

Terry uttered a cry of terror and fled, and the stranger, with a laugh returned to the library and throwing himself into an easy-chair said:

"You see, I protect your interests, my lord, for nothing he could say of what he might hear, could blacken my name in the least.

"You recall me, I believe?"

"Yes, as a passenger upon the ill-fated vessel which was wrecked upon this coast nearly twenty years ago, one night of storm, such as the one now raging. "You have changed but little, sir."

"And yet, twenty years change us sadly, at times. "Now you have aged considerably, though younger than I."

"How do you know my age, sir?" and Lord Cassidy tried to appear at ease, though he was far from feeling so.

"You were born in this castle just fifty years ago to-night."

"Ha! you seem well informed."

The stranger laughed and continued:

"I was born in this castle just fifty-two years ago to-night, for, to the day, there are just two years difference in our ages."

"You were born in this castle, you say?" gasped Lord Cassidy.

"I was."

"You gave your name as Captain Orlando?"

"Yes, Orlando, the Ocean Free Flag, as men call me."

"A pirate?"

"Yes, my lord of Castle Kenmore, I am a pirate, known, as I said, as Orlando the Ocean Free Flag!" was the cool reply of the man as he sat in his easy-chair gazing into the blazing fire, while Lord Cassidy stood gazing at him with a look of almost horror upon his face.

"And you were born in this castle?"

"Just fifty-two years ago to-night."

"It is false!"

"Pardon, my lord; but deception has been practiced in our family for generations.

"Now I am Orlando the pirate, you Lord Crayon Cassidy of Kenmore Castle, and I have no desire to change the situation as it now is.

"Our father, for I am your brother Orlando—"

"It is false! He fell from the cliff when a boy and was drowned."

"So it was supposed, Crayon; but, instead, I was kidnapped."

"A likely story to tell."

"All right; I have the proofs; but, as I said, do not be alarmed, for I care not for the title or the estates, which as the eldest son, are mine."

"Yet it is as I say: I was kidnapped when just seven years of age. You know that our revered father was a trifle wild in his youth, and he secretly married a young girl, whom he afterward deserted and had the marriage set aside, the Cassidys being all-powerful with the law-makers of the land.

"This woman's love turned to hatred, and one day she got her revenge by kidnapping me while I was playing upon the cliff, and my nurse was quietly asleep near by.

"The poor nurse, believing that I had fallen from the cliff, rushed to the castle, told her story, and, in her wild despair, sprung from the cliff and was drowned.

"All this you know, however; but you do not know that this deserted woman carried me to her home on the shores far from hero and brought me up among a lot of smugglers.

"I was a bold lad, and soon became noted as a daring seaman; and more: I was made captain of the smugglers, and from that I turned to piracy, very naturally.

"One day I captured a valuable prize—are you listening, my lord?"

"To every word you utter."

"Thank you; it is pleasant to have an attentive listener to one's tale, though it be an unpleasant one."

"This prize I was anxious to get into port, for various reasons, and so I pretended to be a captive of the pirates, escaped, and ran off with the vessel, the passengers on board acting as crew.

"In a storm we were driven off our course, our vessel was wrecked on this coast, and a lady on board, with an infant but a few days old, was very nearly lost.

"It was her baby boy that you exchanged your baby girl for, that night, believing that your child was dead; but, the little girl did not die; the mother also recovered, in spite of chances a thousand to one against her, and the young lady, your daughter Kathleen, is now a beautiful maiden in her nineteenth year. Now tell me about the boy?"

"Where is this maiden?" hoarsely asked Lord Cassidy.

"Never mind about her, other than to know that she is well and happy, but tell me of the boy."

"You mean that I am to admit your story as true?"

"Why, of course, my dear brother Crayon!"

"Why do you wish to know?"

"I may as well tell you the whole truth."

"That is what I wish you to do."

"Well, the boy is my own son!"

"My God! no! no! no!"

"Yes, it is so, for the lady on the wreck was my wife."

"You recall that I commanded the wrecked vessel, and that a coasting craft was chartered by you the very next day and the survivors were hurriedly sent away."

"Now, you asked nothing about the mother of the child; you only stole the little boy and left, as you believed, a dead girl in her arms, and hastened away."

"I saw your act, and I was delighted with what you had done, for I knew, if I had lost my title and estates, my own boy would get them, even though known as your son."

"I was rejoiced, also, to see that the little girl was not dead, and the kind fishermen upon the coast brought my wife and your child back to life again, I might almost say."

"And the woman, your wife?"

"Is alive and well."

"And the girl?"

"Is with her."

"And believes herself a private's daughter!"

"She has not a suspicion of the truth."

"Thank God for that! but her mother?"

"Is as ignorant as the child of the life of crime I lead."

"She is to be congratulated then, as well as sympathized with."

"Oh, yes."

"Well, why have you come here?"

The strange visitor again laughed, and then said:

"It will surprise you to know."

"Tell me."

"To arrange a marriage between the two children."

"Good Heavens!"

"Oh, I mean it! Brother Crayon, for I wish my son, the next Lord of Kenmore Castle after you, to marry your daughter, Kathleen, the unknown Lady of Kenmore."

"It can never be."

"What?"

"It shall never be," and Lord Cassidy's face

grew deathly pale now and his eyes flashed fiercely.

Suddenly he began to pace to and fro, and extending the length of his walk each time he turned, he suddenly seized from the wall a sword that had belonged to his father. Rushing upon the visitor, Lord Cassidy cried:

"If you are my brother, Sir Pirate, I will kill you. *Die, Orlando*, the curse of the Kenmore name!"

CHAPTER III.

A YOUNG HERO.

A VESSEL-of-war flying the British flag at her peak, hove to off a small port on the English Coast, and let go both her anchors, housed topmasts and was stripped to ride out a fierce gale that was blowing at the time.

She set her signals for a pilot, but not even among the hardy men on that coast could be one found who was daring enough to put off for the cruiser in teeth of such a gale, and which was growing fiercer and fiercer.

Guns were fired, yet went unheeded, as had the signals.

"I know not what to do, Carrington, for these dispatches I bear are marked to be delivered in London without fail, and dispatched through by land by mounted messenger, if I could not make port.

"I know their purport, and that a fleet must be ordered at once to the Mediterranean, and every hour of delay may cost many lives.

"We dare not run in, for this is a terrible harbor to enter even in quiet weather, and no pilot will dare venture out, so as to send dispatches ashore by him.

"I know not what to do, for the chances are a thousand to one that no boat could live in this sea."

"Permit me to take that chance, Captain Rathburn, and carry the dispatches ashore."

The first speaker was Captain Tenchard Rathburn, commanding the king's sloop-of-war Racer, just put off the Gibraltar station, and she had been chosen for her wondrous speed and dispatched with all haste to carry sealed papers to London, with orders to lose not a minute of time in their delivery.

The Racer had strained her masts carrying sail, and caught in a tempest off the coast, was forced to come to anchor for fear of becoming a wreck.

She lay a league off the wild coast, and her officers and crew uneasily watched the masts, even with topmasts housed, fearing she would pitch her sticks overboard.

The one whom Captain Rathburn addressed was his first lieutenant, Carrington, and the one who had made reply was a youth in the uniform of junior officer.

He was a handsome fellow, dark-blue eyes, soft and winning in expression as a woman's, and hair of golden hue, falling in wavy masses about his neck.

He looked the perfect athlete, and was, while there was a mixture of daring, intelligence and *bonhomie* in his face that made it very attractive.

The captain turned upon him with a surprised look and said:

"Carrington, do you bear what our gallant young friend Cassidy asks?"

"Yes, sir, and it is just like Sir Crayon; but he would go to certain death," responded the lieutenant.

"The captain said there was a chance in a thousand, sir, and I ask to take that chance.

"It is rough, I know, but having overheard what was said, many lives may depend upon getting those dispatches through, as I know the English force left in Africa is small, and is threatened with being overwhelmed if help does not arrive.

"My boat's crew will go with me, I know, and if we lose our lives it is in a good cause and all will have been done that could to get the papers to London.

"Pardon me, Captain Rathburn, if I have presumed."

"My dear fellow I have nothing to pardon, and I will say that if man can go through you are the one to do it, and if you make the attempt it will win you promotion for the third time, since our cruise began, for deeds of daring."

"Then I can call away the life-boat, sir?" eagerly said the youth.

"You can just call for volunteers, Cassidy, to man her, for I am not sure a man will go."

"Volunteers ahoy! then I wish to carry most important dispatches ashore and send them by courier to the king."

"Who goes with me?"

The voice of the youth rung out over the decks

and a dead silence followed, as far as reply was concerned.

"My boat's crew, did you hear?" called out the young officer.

"Ay, ay, sir, and Coxswain Bell reports as one," said a hardy old tar stepping aft.

"No, coxswain, you are along in years, and young men should offer," kindly replied Crayon Cassidy.

"I have well nigh lived my span, sir, so what matters a few more years, while lads have the world before them, sir."

"I will go."

"And I go too, sir," and a fine-looking sailor lad stepped to the side of the old coxswain.

"And I go in the boat, sir," said a third.

"You cannot go without me, sir," and a shout arose as a fourth man stepped up in line.

"One more, my men, and we will risk no more lives," said Cassidy cheerily.

"Ay, ay, sir," and a young seaman joined the other four and was greeted with a wild cheer from the crew, in which the score of officers on the quarter-deck also joined.

"Bravo, you hearts of oak!"

"Not one of you shall be forgotten for this brave act," cried Captain Rathburn, and turning to his young officer he grasped his hand and said:

"My brave boy, go and prepare for your desperate game with death."

"I will go below and get the dispatches, which, as the risk is so great, I will break the seal of and read, so as to know their contents, should you be lost."

"If you reach the shore, go at once to London and bear the dispatches to the king, and, when I can do so, I will run into port here to repair damages, ready to return if needed to Africa."

The captain turned hastily away, and Crayon Cassidy hastened to his quarters below decks to prepare for his perilous undertaking.

"Well, Sir Crayon, you are again striving for promotion," said a youth a couple of years his junior, and wearing a midshipman's uniform.

"I am striving to do my duty, Colton, that is all, and if I lose my life, you can tell our parents that I left farewell for them, and died in a good cause."

"Well, if you die, you know, Cray, your loss will be my gain, for I step into your shoes."

"But you are a pretty good brother, after all, and I have nothing against you other than the chance of birth made you the future Lord of Kenmore Castle," said Colton Cassidy.

"And I hold no ill-will against you, Colton, for all of your unkindness against me in the past is forgotten now. There is my hand upon it, brother mine."

"Bah! Don't be sentimental, Sir Crayon, for there is no call for it."

"Go, as you have been fool enough to volunteer to win favor, and if you lose your life, rest assured when father dies I will do the name of Lord of Kenmore full honor. Success to you," and the young midshipman turned away.

"Heartless to the last," muttered Crayon Cassidy, as he again turned to his preparations.

Soon after, he appeared on deck in a storm suit, and was greeted with a hearty cheer.

The captain then came out of the cabin and said:

"The dispatches I have read, my brave young friend, and they are indeed most urgent."

"I have wrapped them in oil-silk and placed them in this belt, which fastens around your waist."

"Now go, and God preserve you and your noble crew."

"Ay, ay, sir!" and, in another minute, the life-boat was let go on a mighty wave, the oars of the four hardy tars struck the waters, the old coxswain held the tiller, and they were away into the very teeth of death.

CHAPTER IV.

FIGHTING DEATH.

THE Racer was pitching wildly, and tugging at her anchors as though angry with them, while great seas would come rolling down upon her from seaward, threatening to sweep her decks from stem to stern.

But all on board the vessel-of-war watched with the most painful anxiety the brave crew in their frail boat, which divided them from certain death.

The four men who were at the oars, had they been picked for crack oarsmen, would have been the very ones chosen, while Coxswain Bell was the most skillful steersman in the ship.

And well did it prove that it was so, as all on board the cruiser could see that the coxswain's

and oarsmen's skill saved the boat a score of times before she was half a mile away.

If only the same fortune would befall them for the remainder of the venturesome undertaking, all would be well!

Sir Crayon Cassidy, the junior officer of the Racer, who had three years before sailed in the Racer as a middy, but who had rapidly won his way to promotion, sat in the stern-sheets of the boat, calm and seemingly wholly unconcerned.

He raised his glass coolly and took a look at the shore, and said:

"We have less than a league to go now, coxswain, and once we pass through the entrance to the bay we will be out of danger, comparatively."

"Yes, sir; we can get under the lee of the headland with the pretty cottage on it yonder."

The officer turned his glass upon the cottage, and replied:

"It is a pretty spot, coxswain, and some one stands on the piazza watching us with a glass—yes, it is a woman."

"Steady, lads, with the oars, for here comes a terror of a sea, and a cross one."

The men and coxswain met it well, and though the boat was wildly tossed about for an instant, it was still keel downward.

After baling the water out, Sir Crayon turned his glass upon the cruiser.

"She is a mile away now, Coxswain Bell, and the headland is hardly much more. I will relieve you with the tiller, if you wish, or take my trick at an oar, if any of you lads need a rest."

"No, no, sir," came in a chorus from coxswain and crew, and the boat held on her way amid the wild waters.

From the cruiser the boat's progress was watched with deeper and deeper interest as she went along. Now she would be seen balancing upon the crest of a mighty wave, and then disappear for so long a while in the hollows of the waves that all would believe her lost, for upon account of the strain on the masts the captain allowed no extra weight aloft and dispensed with a lookout.

At last the boat was supposed to be able to make her way, she having passed over in safety two-thirds of the way to the headland, when a cry of alarm arose as a monster wave, trebling the size of the others, rushed down upon the cruiser, and hundreds of tons of water were hurled upon her decks, while several of the crew were torn from their grasp and borne away to death, for nothing could be done to save them.

Would the little boat withstand the mighty wave which had nearly swamped the large vessel? was now the question upon every lip, and every eye was turned from the spots where the doomed seamen had been last seen to the boat, now nearing the headland.

The wave rushed on toward the shore, dwarfing the others. It was seen to catch the boat, hold it upon its crest an instant, and then hurl it bottom upward with terrible force.

A groan went up from the deck of the cruiser at the sight, and men gazed with blanched faces at one another.

"My God, Colton Cassidy, don't you realize that your brother is doomed?" cried a brother midshipman, as he beheld Colton Cassidy gazing out over the waters with anything but a sad look upon his face.

"I saw what you did, sir, and if Crayon cannot swim ashore he is lost," was the almost indifferent reply.

"Ah! I see, and by his death you become the heir," was the reply, in a tone that made the face of Colton Cassidy flush, for he felt that his secret was read by his brother midshipman whose contempt for him was apparent.

So anxious was Captain Rathburn to see the fate of the brave crew, that he risked the safety of the mast by going aloft himself, glass in hand.

Soon he called out to the deck:

"I see them! The boat is bottom-up, but three men are clinging to the keel. Ah! one has let go, and—by Heaven! he has swum to a man near, and is aiding him to reach the boat."

"The rescuer is Cassidy, as his uniform shows. Bravo! they have reached the boat, and four cling there now!"

Such a cheer as went up from the crew at the words of their captain was never heard in that vessel before. It came from the heart of every man who admired indomitable courage and unselfishness.

The captain still retained his position, and soon called out again that one of the four men had let go his hold, or had been torn away, and the young officer had gone to his rescue and brought him back to safety.

This was repeated several times, and each

time the brave act of Crayon Cassidy was greeted with a cheer.

Then came the fateful words:

"Two men more torn off by that wave just now."

A gloom and silence followed the words, and next came the report:

"Another has gone, and beyond rescue."

"One only remains!"

"Pardon, Captain Rathburn, but is the one who remains my brother?"

The voice was cold, the manner excited, yet from hope of an affirmative reply, rather than a dread that his brother was lost, and quick and cutting came the response:

"Midshipman Cassidy, you are not yet Sir Colton, for your brother still clings to the boat!"

The low laugh of the officers about him, and their looks showed Colton Cassidy how unpopular he was, and how unfeeling and grasping they deemed him.

Then rung out from aloft:

"By Heaven! but Cassidy the hero is saved, for a life-boat is coming off from the shore!"

CHAPTER V.

A FAIR RESCUER.

THE cottage which had been seen from the adventurers in the boat, was upon the headland which formed the left arm of land encircling the harbor of the little seaport.

The other arm, or rugged pile of rocks, was not a third of a mile away, but the going into the harbor was made very dangerous by sunken rocks and reefs which only skillful pilots could avoid with a large vessel, and in a gale the danger was trebled, so that he would have been a daring navigator indeed who would have ventured out to the aid of a vessel in the teeth of the tempest which the Racer was struggling with.

The cottage on the headland was somewhat isolated, for the nearest neighbor was on the road leading around to the town, and not closer than the eighth of a mile, if I except a fishing hamlet on the land side of the point of land.

Here were a score or more of fishermen cots, where they dwelt with their families, and these men, too, were the pilots and life-savers of the little port.

"Perhaps there were, all told, about a hundred souls in the fishing hamlet, and a score of these were brave, hardy men, who owned their fishing smacks and boats, and gained a fair livelihood for their families.

The cottage above them was a cozy house, with lawn in front, a few fine old trees to shelter it, an acre of garden and a number of flower-beds which seemed well cared for.

The cottage, with its half a dozen rooms all comfortably furnished, was the home of a lady and her daughter, and two servants, a man and his wife.

They had moved to the home a couple of years before, and more than that their name was Kenneth, and the husband and father was a sea captain, nothing was known of the two by the villagers.

They lived well, paid their bills, had a horse and chaise, with which to take drives about the country, attended church regularly, and gave a fair share to charity.

In fact the poor were devoted to the sad-faced mother and her beautiful daughter, and the hamlet people, a few hundred yards away, fairly idolized Kathleen Kenneth, or "Pretty Kate," as she was oftener called by the older people.

They owed to her many a kind service, and often had she devoted herself to the sick among them, while every Sunday afternoon, she was wont to read aloud to the old men the news from the papers which her mother subscribed for each week.

Then, too, they admired her pluck, for she was a skillful oarswoman, could sail a boat like a man, and had once saved the life of a little child who had fallen from the rocks and was being carried off by the tide, by springing in with all her clothes on, and swimming to the rescue, holding the little one up above the water until a boat reached her.

It was Kathleen Kenneth that stood upon the piazza watching the daring crew of the life-boat. She had seen the cruiser drop her anchors offshore and knew something was wrong with the vessel.

Then had come the signals for a pilot, and Kathleen had hoped that some of the men from the hamlet would venture out. But, none had dared do so, and next she had seen the vessel's life-boat coming ashore.

"That is as brave a deed as man dare attempt,

and the cause must be urgent that makes them take the risk," said Kathleen, calling to her mother, who came out upon the piazza and joined her.

"Ah, Kathleen, my child, you have stronger nerves than I, for I dare not even watch their progress," said the mother, and she hastened indoors, after telling her daughter to report to her the moment they passed in through the headlands.

And Kate, with her glass to her eye, watched every movement of the coming boat. She saw the huge wave, so much larger than its fellows of the sea, * break over the cruiser, and then, spellbound, watched it rushing down upon the life-boat.

She beheld the officer point to it, the coxswain look hastily astern, and all brace themselves to meet the impending danger.

Then it came. The huge wave seized the boat on its crest, and in an instant the crew were struggling in the sea.

She watched them an instant, saw the young officer reach the upturned boat, aiding a comrade, then leave it and help another to catch hold of their only support, as it was being driven shoreward, and she cried aloud:

"That brave man's life shall be saved! If the boat drives on as it is now going, it will be dashed upon the Porcupine Rocks."

Suddenly she darted away around the cottage, and fled like a deer down a path leading to the fishermen's hamlet.

The men were there, grouped together, talking over the storm, and wondering if the cables of the cruiser would part, or hold through the night.

Into their midst suddenly bounded Kathleen Kenneth.

"Men, the cruiser at anchor in the offing sent a boat ashore, and it has been capsized off Porcupine Rocks. I saw the officer save two of the seamen by helping them to the upturned boat. They must not be allowed to die! Who will go in the surf-boat to their rescue?"

Not a man answered, and many shook their heads.

"Men, did you hear me ask who will go to their aid?"

"No one here, pretty Kate, for it will be certain death, and no chances," one replied.

"Not so! You have chances, or the little boat would not have lived so long, and only a giant wave threw it over."

"Who will pull an oar, my brave lads, while I steer the surf-boat to save those men?" cried the maiden, in a voice that thrilled every heart.

"I will go, Miss Kathleen," responded a handsome young fisherman.

"And I, too!" echoed another.

"The boat needs her ten oars in this tempest, Kathleen declared.

"And we are here," came in a chorus of voices as the other men sprung to the front.

"But our captain is in the town," said one.

"I said that I would take the helm. Do you fear to trust me?"

"No, no, no! but you must not go, Miss Kate," several protested.

"Do you fear to have me take the tiller?"

"No, not that."

"Then go I will! So come!"

There was no use to argue. The long, deep and narrow surf-skiff was launched, the men seized their oars, Kathleen Kenneth grasped the tiller and they shot around the headland to the rescue!

CHAPTER VI.

THE SURVIVOR.

THE announcement of Captain Rathburn, that a boat was coming off from the shore was received with delight by those on the cruiser.

The long surf-boat had been seen to shoot around the headland and boldly plunge headfirst into the wild storm sweeping landward with such terrible force.

The captain of the Racer had steadied himself aloft as well as he could and kept his glass upon the coming boat.

"They are plucky fellows, Carrington, for they are plunging into fearful seas, but are steered as steadily as a ship of the line."

"They have ten oars out, and the one at the helm looks like a boy—no! it is a woman, for I can see her long hair falling about her form—how strange that that boat's crew would trust a woman at the helm."

The crew of the cruiser also thought it

* All old seamen know that, now and then, in a storm, one wave immensely larger than all others, rolls down upon a devoted vessel, often with fatal effect.

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strange indeed, and the interest in the coming of the surf-boat had increased far more.

The captain again called down to his lieutenant:

"Cassidy still clings to the upturned boat, toward which his rescuers are heading—no! My God! he has let go!"

A moan came up from the deck and the captain swept the sea near the spot where the young officer was last seen, his glass taking in every wave crest, but he could see nothing more of the young officer, though he beheld the surf-boat still holding on her course, so he still kept his place aloft.

The surf-boat had met the seas bravely, and her ten powerful oarsmen had forced her into the very teeth of the gale.

They were splendidly trained and rowed as one man, while Kathleen Kenneth handled the tiller in a way that won her the praise of her crew, often outspoken.

She met every wave with skill and nerve, picked her way into the wild waters coolly, and yet kept her eye on the course she was to go, when now and then the upturned boat with a single form clinging to it was visible.

Then, too, she braved the breakers upon Porcupine Rocks, toward which the upturned boat was driving, and her heart almost stood still when she thought that she might be too late.

Suddenly she caught sight of the boat, and was about to cry out that the man had let go his hold, when she feared, if she did so, that the crew would not be willing to go on.

So she kept her secret and held on, still searching the seas until she was almost up to a rock that rose high out of the waters and beat back the angry waves.

Once around this and she would have to take the seas quartering, as she bore toward the Porcupine rocks.

She was within a few boat-lengths of the rock, and the crew gave a quick, longing glance at it, as though they would like to pull under the lee it afforded, when, suddenly, all were startled by a hail:

"Life-boat ahoy!"

Kathleen's first glance was toward the upturned boat, a couple of cable-lengths away, and she saw that, in another moment, it would be dashed to pieces upon Porcupine Rocks.

Then she looked abroad and saw the head and shoulders of a man rise upon a wave not far away. Snatching her cap from her head she waved it, for her answering hail was blown back into her teeth.

"Aho! go to the lee of that rock and put about, and pick me up as you return ashore."

"All the others are gone!"

There was not a tremor in the voice, and no weakness.

The man was a powerful swimmer, full of nerve and evidently undaunted.

Again did Kathleen wave her hat, and before she could head off under the rock's lee, again came the command from the swimmer, who evidently thought she was coming on:

"Do as I order! To put about here will be to swamp your boat!"

"He knows," said one.

"Yes, and he's cool about it as though giving an order from the quarter-deck," the young sailor who had just volunteered, responded.

Kathleen had already pointed her bows for the lee of the high rock, and, after a wild tossing as the waves met them, the boat shot into comparatively quiet water, behind that sea buttress.

It was a foaming caldron, it was true, but there was the space of half an acre in which the surf-boat could come round.

Hardly had she gone under the rock's lee when the bold swimmer drove by on a mighty wave and his clear voice rung out cheerily:

"Bravo, lads! now pick me up as you go shoreward!"

The surf-boat was quickly brought around; the order came to "give way!" and it went flying out upon the wild waves once more, now driving before the gale.

The swimmer was half a cable's length ahead, steadyng himself as best he could and facing the coming boat.

Down it came upon him, and two of the men shipped their oars and seized lines with life-buoys attached to throw to him.

Kathleen, pale, determined, full of nerve, steered superbly, and, as the boat neared the swimmer, called out:

"Cast!"

The lines were thrown. One was caught by the swimmer, who swung astern as the boat swept by. The two men dragged him rapidly in and over the high stern into the boat!

"Lads, I have to thank you for my life—what! and a lady holds the helm and in such a storm?"

"Permit me to relieve you, miss, for I see you are exhausted."

"But you too, sir, must be greatly fatigued?"

"Oh, no, I am a tireless swimmer, and left the life-boat to come and meet you, while I saw that my support would carry me down upon those rocks. Let me relieve you at the helm."

She relinquished the tiller without a word, for now that she had accomplished her mission, her strength indeed began to fail her.

"Now, lads, we must get this lady safely home again," remarked the new helmsman, cheerily, for he and the others knew that the danger was yet desperate.

The crew of the boat felt confidence in one who had shown such nerve and power, and who had ordered them under the lee of the rock to go about, as he had.

"I verily believe, sir, you would have reached the shore by swimming," said the young sailor who had first volunteered.

"It was my intention to try," was the modest response, and he added:

"You came to my rescue against fearful odds, and the king shall know the name of every one on this boat, I pledge you; but I regret my men were not so fortunate as I, as, poor fellows, their strength gave out, and they could not hold on."

"How many in all, sir?"

"There were six of us, and I am the sole survivor, so permit me to introduce myself, miss, as Sir Crayon Cassidy, junior lieutenant in his Majesty's Navy, and the bearer of most important dispatches to the king, which was the cause of my risking so much to get ashore."

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT THE SIGNALS TOLD.

THE course of the long surf-boat was watched with the deepest of interest by all of the dwellers in the hamlet, who had gone to the headland near the cottage to watch it.

Mrs. Kenneth had thus heard of her daughter's daring cruise, and she too, white and trembling, had her eyes riveted upon the boat, and from her heart ascended prayers for the safety of her child and those with her.

"There is an interested group upon yonder headland," said Crayon Cassidy, as he saw the crowd upon the hill.

"Yes, they are from the hamlet where these brave men dwell, and I see my mother there, for the cottage is my home," responded Kathleen.

"A charming home by the sea it is, miss."

"And let me say, sir, that but for Miss Kathleen, not one of us would have stirred to come out in such a blow."

"She said she would go, and so dared us to accompany her."

"You owe your life to her, sir, or the attempt made at least, for what I have seen of yer, lieutenant, I believes you would have reached the shore."

"Even granted that I did, my brave man, you all risked your lives ten times over to come to my rescue, and you shall not be forgotten—hark! they are cheering you from the headland!"

The crew gave one cheer as an answer, and Kathleen waved her cap again and again, while as the surf-boat swept around the headland into the harbor, and the fishing hamlet came into view, she said:

"Permit me, sir, to offer the hospitality of our home, until you can dry your clothes, for the lads here will supply you with dry ones, and you can leave to-morrow for London by coach."

"I thank you, miss, and for an hour or so I will accept your hospitality, until I can get a conveyance to go with all speed to London, for every minute lost may cost many lives."

The boat now landed and the crew and Kathleen were greeted with wild cries of delight by the people of the hamlet, who had returned to the shore to greet them.

The young officer followed Kathleen up to her home, where Mrs. Kenneth after greeting her daughter affectionately, welcomed the one to whose rescue she had gone, and he was shown to his room, where one of the fisher-lads joined him with his Sunday suit of clothing.

While the servant woman put the wet garments of the officer to dry by the fire, her husband was dispatched to the town to order a pair of horses and chaise, with a driver, to call at the cottage within a couple of hours, while a messenger on horseback was dispatched on ahead to have fresh animals ready all along the road, for those were not the days of steam and rapid traveling, my good reader.

Kathleen soon changed her drenched clothing and aided her mother in preparing a tempting

supper for the young officer, Mrs. Kenneth remarking:

"Sir Crayon Cassidy, you said his name was, Kathleen?"

"Yes, mother."

"I have heard your father say that it was one of the proudest titles and largest estates in the kingdom."

"His father is Lord Cassidy of Kenmore Castle."

"Yes, then he will be Lord Cassidy some day; but he is a noble young man, from his face and bearing, and very gracious."

"Yes, mother," he shook hands so cordially with all the crew, and Rupert Farnsworth told me just now that he said his clothes were a perfect fit, and that he had worn the garb of a common sailor, as he had run off before the mast, and when his father found out where he was and got him a midshipman's berth, he had already won the place by jumping into the sea in a storm and saving the captain's life."

"His face shows what he is, Kathleen; but it must be most important service that he is on, to risk life in coming ashore as he did."

"Yes, mother, and he seemed to feel for the men who were lost, and in spite of his light way of speaking I am sure I saw tears in his eyes when he told us of poor old Bell, the coxswain, who had said to him:

"Mention that it was doing my duty, lieutenant, and then let go and sunk from sight."

When the lieutenant came from his room he was looking quite himself, and Kathleen thought very handsome, for Rupert Farnsworth's clothes fitted him well.

He gave Mrs. Kenneth and Kathleen a graphic account of the poor men clinging for life to the boat, and modestly said:

"Three times I brought poor fellows back that let go, and poor old Bell the coxswain, was the last to go, while as I happen to have a superabundance of strength and staying powers, I managed to hold on with little trouble."

Supper was then served, and soon after the servant-man returned to say that the vehicle would be along within an hour, and Mrs. Kenneth hastened to see that the officer's clothes were dry and pressed out for him.

It was just sunset, and the storm was breaking away, the sky clear, when Lieutenant Carrington hastily called the captain of the Racer on deck.

"They are signaling, sir, from the headland."

The signals were soon seen to be flags run up upon a flagstaff in front of the cottage on the headland, and they read:

"Was rescued by life-boat from shore—our only survivor—leave at once by special conveyance for London—CASSIDY."

The cheers that greeted these tidings made the cruiser echo again, and joy shone upon every face but one, and that one was Colton Cassidy, the midshipman.

His joy at the belief that his brother was lost, was turned to sorrow at the knowledge that he was not yet to step into that brother's shoes.

There was a lull during the night, and at dawn Rupert Farnsworth came off in his skiff, having been so requested by Crayon Cassidy, to pilot the cruiser in, and all heard the story of the rescue, while the young pilot added:

"But I believe he'd have reached the shore unaided, gentlemen, as I never saw a swimmer like him."

In this the officers of the Racer agreed, for Crayon Cassidy was a phenomenal swimmer, as all knew, and the crew had given him the name of the "Man Fish" from witnessing his marvelous exploits in the water.

The Racer dropped anchor off the town, and Captain Rathburn and all of his officers not on duty drove around to Kenneth cottage to pay their compliments to the fair rescuer Kathleen, and were charmingly received by the mother and daughter.

They then visited the hamlet, and obtained the names of the gallant crew of the rescue boat, and upon their return to the vessel it was found that the repairs to the cruiser could not be made there, but that she would have to go up the coast to a larger port.

A letter was left for the young officer upon his return, telling him where the vessel would be, but, unless ordered off at once, to await there until she put in for him.

Then the Racer took advantage of the quiet weather and sailed for the other port, to at once set to work upon her repairs.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FATHER'S CONSENT.

SEVERAL months after the bold deed of Sir Crayon Cassidy to reach the shore with dis-

patches for the king, and which had so nearly cost him his life, a vessel hove to a league up the coast from the headland one dark night soon after sunset.

A boat put off from her side containing but one person, and he sent the little gig along at a swift pace, keeping close inshore, just outside of the breakers.

He was not long in making the league down to the headland, and under the lee of Porcupine Rocks, which in quiet weather formed a good breakwater, landed upon the shore, drawing his little boat up on a rock with an ease that denoted great strength.

He took the path leading up to the headland, and stepping upon the piazza of the Kenneth cottage, knocked at the door.

It was opened by Mrs. Kenneth, who started at sight of the stranger, and then sprung forward and greeted him with a warmth which showed the relationship in which he stood to her.

"I am so glad that you have come, Kenneth, for I have much to tell you," she said, after her welcome, and then she added:

"But come into the dining-room, for we were just about to sit down to supper, being late tonight as we drove over to town."

"And Kathleen?"

"Is well, and will be delighted to have this surprise, for we had not expected you for months yet."

"No, I came unexpectedly, wife; but I have a motive in doing so, as I am anxious to move you to America again."

"To America? I am sure that I will be glad to go, and Kathleen loved her home there; but I am not so sure she will care to return now."

Kathleen then came out and welcomed her father warmly.

He was a tall man, with great broad shoulders, a splendid physique, and a face that was dark and strangely stern.

Still he had never been stern toward his wife and daughter, and his manner seemed to be gentle, his voice low and musical when he spoke to them.

He was dressed in the attire of a British captain of the merchant service, and hardly appeared to be over forty years of age, though he must have been an older man.

The three sat down to supper, and afterward adjourned to the pleasant sitting-room where Captain Kenneth asked:

"Well, Kathleen, what do you think of returning to America?"

"To America, father?" and her face flushed.

"Yes, my child."

"Father, a few months ago I should have been glad, for I dearly love the old home on the Carolina Coast, where my girlhood was passed."

"But now you do not care to go?"

"Father, let me tell you the truth, that I have learned to love a young gentleman who has become very dear to me."

"I will tell you just how it all came about," and in her frank way Kathleen told of her meeting with Crayon Cassidy, how she had gone to his rescue and all.

Then she went on to say:

"The king decorated him for carrying those dispatches through as he did, and sent me this diamond cross for my services, with a gold medal and twenty pounds to each one of the boat's crew who went with me."

"The dispatches were an urgent demand for relief for a force in Africa, and fortunately the king was able to head off a fleet due at Gibraltar, and send them to save the English troops, so the young officer accomplished what he had risked so much for."

"He returned here to rejoin his vessel, which had gone elsewhere for repairs, and having orders to await her here, did so."

"It was six weeks before she came, and in that time he was a daily visitor here, and I learned to love him with all my heart—in truth, father, he asked me to be his wife some day."

"And your answer?"

"That one day in the future, with your consent, for my mother gave hers, I would do so."

"He is an officer in the Royal Navy, you say?"

"Yes, sir, a lieutenant, for he has been four times promoted for bravery, though, I believe, not twenty years of age."

"Where is he now?"

"In the Mediterranean with his vessel, the Racer."

"When do you expect to see him again, Kathleen?"

"I was to write to him to Gibraltar, sir; but I do not know when I will see him."

"Very well, my child, I will talk it over with your mother, and you shall have my answer."

"It is getting late, now, so bid me good-by, for I must sail before dawn, and I have something to talk with your mother about."

What it was Kathleen did not know, but she wondered at her father's short visit, and unable to go to sleep heard him leave the house an hour after.

She soon had risen and from her window she saw him go down the sea path to the shore, which showed that he had not come by vehicle from the town.

She looked out upon the sea but saw no vessel, and at last her eyes were just closing in slumber, for her mother had gone to her room, when the deep boom of a heavy gun fairly shook the house.

She started up in alarm, and glanced from the window.

There, upon the moonlit sea, a half a league off-shore, she beheld a large schooner under full sail flying along before a rapidly-increasing breeze.

Soon after there came into sight a sloop-of-war also under full sail, and evidently in chase of the schooner, for a red flash came from her bow and a second heavy gun echoed along the rocky shore.

She heard the crashing of timbers as the shot cut into the schooner, which luffed sharp, and then came in rapid succession her broadside guns.

The guns were well-aimed, for the cruiser's bowsprit was shot away, causing her to broach to, her foretopmast came down with a crash, and one of her anchors was cut loose so as to sink and bring her to an anchor.

And on her course once more swept the schooner whose deadly fire had checked the pursuit of the large cruiser.

Mrs. Kenneth had hastened to her daughter's room, at the first fire, and the two now stood looking upon the scene, while crowds from the hamlet alarmed by the firing, came rushing to the headland to see the cause.

"What does it mean, mother?"

"A king's cruiser chasing a pirate, doubtless, my child."

"And father? Where can his vessel be, for he came not from the town?"

"His vessel he left off-shore, and it is safe, Kathleen."

"And the pirate has escaped?"

"Yes."

"Mother, do you not know the cruiser, for I do?"

"What is she?"

"The king's ship Racer, mother."

"I believe you are right, my child."

"Then I shall see Sir Crayon, and—my answer, mother?"

"Your father gives his consent, Kathleen, if Sir Crayon will come to America after one year to get his bride."

"He will come," was the confident response of the maiden, and until her eyes closed in slumber she lay looking out upon the Racer, which was slowly making her way into port, Rupert Farnsworth having gone out to pilot her in.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SAILOR'S PLEDGE.

WITH her loss of sleep during the night, Kathleen slept late the following morning, and did not awake until her mother came to her with a note, which a messenger had brought an hour before, asking permission from Mrs. Kenneth for the visitor, Sir Crayon Cassidy, to come to breakfast with them at nine.

"I have all ready, Kathleen, but let you sleep to get back your pretty looks, and he will be here soon," said her mother, with a smile.

Kathleen never looked more beautiful than when, half an hour after, she met her lover at the door and welcomed him.

And he too was resplendent in a new uniform, and seemed even in the few months that had passed since she had seen him, to have grown more dignified and manly.

"Now, sir, pray tell us what brings you here, when I did not expect you for a year, or longer?" said Kathleen, as they were seated at the table in the cozy little breakfast-room.

"We got orders to come home for special service which the Racer is to be sent upon, I half-way believe to American waters, and if so, I shall ask to be relieved, if you give me any encouragement to do so, Miss Kathleen."

"I shall not give you the slightest, Sir Crayon, for I really hope that you will be ordered to American waters."

"You do? Well, I shall not go!"

"I regret to hear you say so, for mother and I are to return to America to live."

"You are to go! That alters the case then."

"But can I believe her, Mrs. Kenneth?"

"Yes, it is true!"

"Then to American waters I go, and if the Racer is not to go there, then I shall ask to be relieved from her and sail in another vessel."

"In fact, I would be glad to change my vessel, for I assure you I have cause, as my younger brother, a midshipman on board, renders life in the same ship with him most unpleasant."

"I will be in port here not half a day, only until we can repair damages, sustained in chasing a pirate last night, and which we have been in chase of for some days, but feared he had slipped us."

"It was a pirate then, Sir Crayon?"

"Yes; none other than that terrible scourge Orlando the Ocean Ogre, for whose head a fortune is offered."

"We chased him from off the coast of France, and he dodged us in the night and ran in here somewhere."

"We hailed a brig however who had seen him coming close in along this coast, so we determined to follow, and caught him at anchor."

"I am sure he had some communication with the shore, for a boat was seen going off to him, and he got up anchor and picked it up."

"We opened fire, when he gave us a broadside, cut one of our anchors loose, dismounted a gun, snapped off our bowsprit and brought down our foretopmast."

"Every one of the fellow's shots told, and just put us out of the chase while he sailed serenely away."

"It was a shame, was it not, for it would have been a grand thing for your vessel to have captured that horrid pirate."

"But I am so glad that you drove him away from this coast."

"And so am I, though he is lost to us, and gave us a token of remembrance of him in crippling the ship and killing and wounding half-a-dozen brave lads."

"We will sail at noon, I believe, and I am to put off from here with the young pilot, who is down at his home, but will let me know when the ship leaves her anchorage, so I have just about two hours to have all your American plans, and what to decide upon for the future."

Mrs. Kenneth then said that her husband had been able to run by and see her but for a few hours, and as his voyaging would be in American waters in the future, he had thought it best for herself and Kathleen to move to the Carolina Coast, near a small port where he would secure them a comfortable home.

So it had been decided that they should set sail early the next month, in a vessel bound to Baltimore, from whence they could make their way more readily to their new home.

"And did you speak to Captain Kenneth upon the subject nearest my heart, Mrs. Kenneth?" asked the young sailor.

"I did, Sir Crayon."

"And his answer?"

"Was to the effect that if you loved Kathleen you would come to America after her, but not until a year at least had passed."

"I can ask no more; but you must let me know just where I can find you there, for, as I said, I believe the Racer is to be sent to American waters, as soon as she is fitted out."

"She is the fleetest of the king's cruisers, and British merchant vessels have had much to contend with on the coast of America, and in the West Indies, with pirates, and I suppose we will have to hunt down these lawless rovers."

"I hope that you can capture Orlando the Ogre," said Kathleen.

"Yes, I sincerely hope so; but he has a wonderfully fleet vessel, as I have reason to know, and is a desperate fighter, or he would never have escaped this long."

"The next month I shall pass at home, I hope, for I have seen my parents but little the past few years, and I wish to tell them of my new happiness in finding one I love so dearly, to whom I owe my life and whom I hope one day to make the future Lady of Kenmore Castle."

"I regret what you said about your brother, Sir Crayon," said Kathleen, and she added:

"Will he return home with you?"

"Oh yes; but I also regret his unfortunate nature, which causes him to feel unkindly toward me because the accident of birth made me the heir."

"I tried to believe at first that it was my fault, that there was bitterness between us, but as he is on friendly terms with but one officer in

the vessel, I am now convinced that it is his nature."

"In fact, I have reason to know just how he feels, as he makes no secret of it, and I hope that we will be ordered to different vessels."

"I hope so, too," said Kathleen, earnestly, and soon after the two went for a walk in the grounds, from which they were called by Rupert Farnsworth, who told the young officer that the Racer had left her anchorage, and he was going off to pilot her out of the harbor.

Farewells were heartily said, with hopes of meeting ere long in America, and Sir Crayon took his leave, and was soon on the deck of the Racer.

"Well, Sir Crayon, did you pledge your troth to the little fisher-girl who I learn came out in the surf-boat to your rescue, the day you made such a fool of yourself, and lost the king five good men?" sneered Colton Cassidy, as his brother came on board.

"Yes, I pledged my love to one whom I hope some day to make my wife, Colton, humble though her origin may be," was the cool reply of the young noble, as he turned away and leveled his glass upon the Kenneth cottage, upon the flagstaff in front of which had just been run up the signal flags which read:

"Farewell! Bon voyage!"

CHAPTER X.

AT KENNETH CASTLE.

As the young lieutenant had surmised, the Racer had been ordered home to be put in perfect repair and sent to American waters on a pirate-hunting cruise.

So many stories had reached the king of bold buccaneers on the coast of America about the West Indies and in the Caribbean sea, where there were many British merchantmen, that it had been decided to dispatch the fleetest of the English cruisers on the special duty of running down the black flag rovers.

As her officers had been for a long time absent from home, they were nearly all given leave for a month, while the Racer was in the yard undergoing a thorough overhauling, and so Colton Cassidy started at once for Kenmore Castle, while Sir Crayon remained a few days in London to attend to some business his father had written to him to look after there.

It was therefore a week after his brother's arrival at Kenmore before he put in an appearance, and to his surprise his mother received him with marked coldness, while there also seemed to be a restraint in his father's greeting of him.

Colton nodded to him from his seat near the fire, with the remark:

"I have told them of your intending to make a common little fishmonger the future Lady of Kenmore, Sir Crayon."

For some reason Colton Cassidy had always seemed to hold full sway in Kenmore Castle.

He bullied his mother when a mere child, and his father later, and kept the servants in perfect awe of him.

He had domineered over Crayon from boyhood, simply because his brother cared not to have trouble with him and so yielded.

He had insulted him innumerable times at the mess table aboard ship, and once had attempted it upon duty, when to his amazement and chagrin he had been at once ordered under arrest, with the remark:

"Midshipman Cassidy, when I am in the discharge of my duties as an officer, I do not recognize the kinship between us that you take advantage of to insult me."

After this Colton Cassidy was more careful, but that he had earned the hatred of all on board the vessel he could not but know.

Never before had Lord Kenmore, his wife or Colton seen the face of Crayon wear the look it did, as he turned upon the young man.

Striding up to him he said in a calm but terribly earnest voice:

"Colton, you have insulted me since our boyhood; but I swear to you, if ever again you cast a slur upon the lady I have asked to become my wife, you will rue it the moment the words are uttered, for from that moment I shall acknowledge no kinship between us."

Colton Cassidy at heart was a coward, and the look and words of his brother fairly alarmed him.

He saw that he had gone too far, so ventured to say:

"Why I did not know I had said aught to anger you."

"You know all that you said and intended, sir—drop it!"

Then turning to his mother, with every vestige of anger gone from his face, he said:

"Mother, pardon me, and you my father also."

"I hope I find you both well."

"I have been upset, my son, by what Colton has told me," said the mother, a handsome woman of forty.

"I have just returned home, mother, after a long absence away."

"I left, a boy before the mast, to work my way to the quarter-deck, and I return a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, having been four times promoted and twice decorated for meritorious service."

"Certainly I would not unite my life to one, even though I owed to her my life, were she not worthy the honor of becoming the future Lady of Kenmore."

"Need I now say more, my father and my mother?"

The mother made no reply, but Lord Kenmore said calmly:

"No, my son, you need say no more, for I know something of the lady you have pledged your love to, and I will say that in every way she is worthy the honor you intend for her, and I shall place no barrier in the way of your union at a suitable time."

"Oh father! how happy you have made me."

"Mother, have I no word from you?"

She remained silent, while Colton stepped to her side quickly and whispered to her.

Lord Kenmore saw it and said:

"My son, your mother has been absent for some time, and I have not spoken to her upon the subject, intending first to have a talk with you upon your return, as I received word of your vessel's coming soon to London, so wrote you there, thinking that you would be given a month's leave."

"I will talk with you later, and then give your mother my reasons for allowing you to marry the lady of your choice."

"Now let the matter be dropped wholly, when I say to you, Colton, that I shall tolerate no interference from you in my plans, or the management of my household, and if you are wise you will not cause me to say more."

Colton was stunned, for never before had his father so spoken to him, and he appealed to his mother with a beseeching look.

But Lady Kenmore saw that her lord was as fully aroused as was her eldest son, and she wisely gave the younger one no encouragement, and Sir Crayon broke in pleasantly just then with a request to tell them the service that the Racer was to be ordered upon.

Thus the evening passed away, though there was a certain restraint upon all.

When Lord Kenmore retired to his rooms that night, in swept Lady Kenmore in her dressing-robe, and haughtily she said:

"Now, my lord, I demand to know why you give your consent to your son to marry a fisher-girl?"

"In the first place Colton has told you wrong, for the lady in question is no fisher-girl, but the daughter of a sea captain, and her mother is well born, being the child of an American planter."

"She is not noble."

"You are mistaken, for this sea-captain is my elder brother, the present Lord Kenmore, did he choose to claim the title and estates, and whom we all believed to be dead."

"He is dead! he is dead!" almost shrieked the proud woman.

"Calm yourself, my dear, for I have my proof that he is alive, and he asks that our son may become Lord Kenmore, but marry his daughter, and I consent, as you will."

"My God, yes! but does Crayon know this?"

"No; and more—he must not, nor shall Colton. Is my explanation satisfactory, wife?"

"Perfectly so, my lord," and Lady Kenmore swept back to her rooms to commune over how close a call she had had of losing the title of mistress of Kenmore Castle.

CHAPTER XI.

A COMPROMISE.

THE sudden act of Lord Kenmore in seizing the sword of his father from the wall of the library, and suddenly rushing upon his midnight visitor, would have caught almost any man at a disadvantage.

Lord Kenmore had decided in his own mind that the man before him was his brother.

Just on the wall behind him hung a life-size portrait of his father, in full uniform, and any one would at the first glance have noted the striking resemblance between the two in form and in face.

Then the tone of the sailor's voice had reminded

him of his father, so he was convinced that his visitor told him only the truth.

But as he had proclaimed himself as Orlando, the pirate, he decided to act upon that standpoint.

He would kill him, call in his servants and state that the visitor had come to force money from him, and was none other than the noted Orlando, the Ocean Free Flag, as he had so proclaimed himself.

All this had passed in the mind of Lord Kenmore.

If he killed the man he would take his brother's life; but he had never known him as such, and to the world he would be the hero for having slain the pirate.

Then, if he had to bear in his heart the record of his deed, he would have as a compensation the fact that he would still remain Lord of Kenmore, which, with his elder brother alive, he certainly was not.

So it was, wrought up to frenzy, Lord Kenmore had seized the sword and rushed upon his visitor.

He was noted as a swordsman, and expected to have his way; but, to his surprise, Orlando threw off his cloak, drew his sword with the rapidity of a flash of lightning, and caught the blade with consummate skill upon his own.

"Brother, I warn you that you have drawn blade upon Orlando, the Free Flag Rover, so lower your weapon ere I disarm you," said the pirate, calmly.

But Lord Kenmore was not intimidated, and furiously attacked his brother, to suddenly find his weapon twisted from his grasp, while the pirate said, quietly:

"You forget you fight one who day and night has his sword in hand. Sit down now and listen to reason."

Lord Kenmore sunk into his chair, almost overcome with the revulsion of feeling.

Orlando picked up the sword, returned it to its place, and sheathing his own blade drew his chair nearer to his brother and said:

"Now, be reasonable, Crayon, and hear what I have to say."

"I will listen, sir."

"To all intents and purposes I am dead, as Lord of Kenmore, and you are in my place.

"So far well; but in the flesh I yet live, and I am willing to show you proof that I am he whom I say I am."

"I need no further proof."

"I am glad; but I have the proof, if you wish, in the clothes I had on the day I was kidnapped, the diamond buckles of my little shoes, a tiny ring, and, better still, if you look closely at my eyes you will see that the right one is black, the left one dark-blue, which was the case with the boy Lord of Kenmore."

"About my neck was a chain suspending a miniature of our parents, and this I have, so that had I been drowned all these things would have been lost."

"In addition, the woman who stole me lives, and she holds to-day keepsakes given her by our father, and letters, which would go to prove their early marriage, which was set aside, and she has given me a paper under oath, that she kidnapped me in infancy from revenge against our father, and there are old people living in the place where she dwelt who will swear to this woman bringing home a child, a boy, just at the age I was when kidnapped."

"Now such are my proofs, and were I to-day to present them I could become Lord of Kenmore."

"But you dare not do so, for you are a pirate."

"Who knows me as such?"

"I do."

"How?"

"By your own confession."

"My dear brother, do not delude yourself, for all would say you made the charge not to be thrown out of your title and estates."

"Now I could bring proof that I am an honest American sea-captain, and no one could prove me to be a pirate, as I have always worn a false beard and a helmet in action, beneath the latter being a wig of long hair."

"Now, I have no desire to take your estates, or your title."

"I was brought up from a woman's revenge against our father, to be all that was bad."

"I thus became a pirate, and yet you will admit that the gentleman and good blood are strong within me, for my manners are courtly, and I have educated myself pretty well."

"I married a lady, a Carolina planter's daughter, a man of good family and a gentleman," but I did it under false pretenses.

"I have kept my secret from her, all in my

power, and I have given her, and one daughter—*your daughter in truth*—a pleasant home, visiting them when I could do so.

"For reasons, or rather fear of being tracked, I have often changed their home, and when last I visited them I discovered that my daughter, for so I will call her, had gone to the rescue of your son, as I must call Sir Crayon, at the risk of her own life."

"They learned to love each other, and from all accounts he is a noble fellow, and he has asked her to become his wife after he becomes of age."

"It was for this reason that I wrote to you, and have visited you."

"I love the girl as my own child, and the boy I cling to most fondly."

"Now you cannot object to Kathleen on account of her origin, she being *your child*, nor can I object to Crayon, as being my son."

"So let them marry and be happy."

"But my wife will never consent."

"I am aware that the Lady of Kenmore was not of noble family and that she thinks more of a title and riches than she does of her own soul, so simply hint to her that *I am alive*, that I am an honest sea-captain in America, and have married well, am rich, so do not care to claim my title and make her drop back to *Mistress Cassidy*, so will remain plain Captain Orlando Kenneth, if she will consent for the match between the children."

"Do you accept the compromise, Crayon?"

"I do, upon condition that you never divulge the secret."

"I swear not to do so."

"Or let it be known that you are Orlando the Free Flag?"

"I love the children too dearly to put a curse upon them, rest assured."

"Now let us have a glass of hot whisky together, and I will return to my vessel, which must be well off-shore before dawn."

"In such a storm?"

"A man whose neck is in the noose, Crayon, holds no fear of the elements," was the quiet reply.

Half an hour after the frightened Terry was called to show the visitor out to the castle gate, and watching from the tower, Lord Kenmore gave a sigh of relief as he saw the pirate vessel sail out to sea in the face of the darkness and tempest.

CHAPTER XII.

AS LORD KENMORE TOLD IT.

BY a strange revolution of feeling, when Lord Kenmore discovered that Crayon was really the heir to Kenmore's title and estates, as the son of his elder brother Orlando, pirate though he was, he bated him with all his heart.

He had sinned to secure an heir, and that her little girl was just dead, he had discovered the shipwrecked mother, lifeless as he thought, with a baby boy in her arms, and had quickly made the exchange.

As the children were so young, the boy scarcely a month old, and his daughter but a few hours, no one noted the change except the faithful nurse, and not a shadow of a suspicion had fallen upon the deed of the nobleman, not even his wife suspecting it.

The nurse had died suddenly soon after, and so the secret, as Lord Kenmore had believed, was in the grave with her.

Now, he had a son of his own, Colton, whom he really wanted to be his heir, and so he decided to see if he did not understand the proud and noble nature of Crayon sufficiently well to know what he would do should he be told that he was not really the heir.

At least it was worth the trial, and he determined to make it.

The next day all was serene in the castle, for the Lady Kenmore had no desire to go against the wishes of her husband, who she now knew had no claim upon his title and estates.

Colton was not expected to be gracious, and after a nod of recognition to him, Crayon ignored his existence.

"I wish to have a talk with you, my son," said Lord Kenmore the following day, and he led the way to a little rustic retreat on the cliff, where they could be wholly alone.

The spot commanded an extensive view of the castle and grounds, the harbor, up and down the coast for miles, and of the sea.

"Crayon, you remember that I gave my consent to your union with a young girl who saved your life?"

"Yes, father."

"You wrote me of the occurrence, as did also

Captain Rathburn, but you said no more than that the girl's pluck had caused a crew to go to your rescue, she going as helmswoman."

"It was true father."

"Now your brother Colton was more communicative—"

"He ever is, in my affairs, father, concealing only his own."

"Do not be severe, for he is a boy, and I predict a great career for him."

"Yes, my lord."

"Now he wrote me that which caused me to investigate, how it matters not, and as I told your mother, last night, the lady is well worthy of your love."

"Thank you, father."

"The consent of your mother is also given with mine, and you can marry the lady when you deem it best."

"But first let me tell you a secret, one that you must pledge me your word to make known to no one."

"I certainly so pledge myself, father."

"Under no circumstances, in any way, must you betray your pledge."

"You have my word of honor, sir."

"And I take it in all faith, and will confide my secret to you to act as you deem best, while I will be glad to offer to you the advice that is best upon the matter."

"Your words have a strange meaning, father."

"You shall know all, and what I did was not from a wrong, but to save your mother's life, for I was wrapped up in her."

"Pray tell me, father, what you would, for I have only the belief that you could be guilty of no wrong act."

"It was wrong, yet it was, under the circumstances, right."

"I must go back to the time of the birth of our first child."

"Ah! then there was one older than me?"

"No, but your mother's life hung by a thread. She was told that she had a fine child, and she relapsed into unconsciousness, and thus lay for days."

"One night there was a fearful storm on the coast, and a vessel was driven ashore just there—you know the spot, for it has often been pointed out to you."

"I went down among the life-savers, and brought ashore a lady and her infant boy."

"I had the lady brought to the castle, and the physician said she would not live an hour, so returned to those who needed him upon the beach."

"Just then the nurse came to me and said our child, a little daughter, was dead, and that your mother had rallied and asked for her baby."

"In my despair I seized the child of the dying woman from the wreck, the nurse dressed him up, and he was given to Lady Kenmore, who never knew the secret."

"My God, father! I was that baby boy?"

"Yes, my son?"

The young man bowed his head in his hands and for some moments could not speak.

Then he asked faintly:

"And my own mother?"

The next morning she too had rallied, and the captain of the wrecked vessel, for reasons I will later explain, had already chartered a coast vessel from the port a league above here, and had placed her on board of it, with others, and what part of the cargo they could save from the wreck."

"And the baby girl, your dead child?"

"The child, I long afterward learned was not dead, as we had believed, and the mother, being so ill, had not known whether her child was a boy or a girl, and never knew the difference."

"Father, a great crime has been done here, for I am not your heir."

"My son, that is my secret; but I did what I did to save your mother's life, and did she know now the truth it would kill her, for you know she has heart trouble?"

"No, father, I knew not this, though I was aware that at times she was an invalid."

"Of course I would not allow the doctor to tell her, and do all I can to keep her from any scene of excitement, so you may understand now to let her know the truth, that you are not her son, would kill her."

"Yes, it might do so, father, and it is best for her not to know; but do you know aught of—my mother?"

"My son, I will tell you all that I know. The vessel happened to be a prize of that pirate Orlando the Ocean Free Flag."

"Father!"

"He had captured her, with a valuable cargo

and a few passengers on board, among them your mother."

"To get her into port he went on board as a merchant captain, with some of his crew, all pretending to be captives of the pirates who escaped with the vessel, a brig."

"They were wrecked on this coast, as I said, and that was the reason that Orlando was so anxious to leave at once, and chartering a vessel carried off your mother and his other captives with him."

"For ransom, I suppose?"

"Yes, of course, for your mother was a lady, and of wealth, I judged, for her clothes and baby garments were of the finest and richest materials, while she wore many rare jewels."

"And you have known nothing of her since?"

"Yes," was the reply, and Lord Kenmore turned his face away, gazing out over the sea as though in deep thought, while in reality he was hiding from the penetrating eyes of the young officer the guilt that he knew was stamped upon every feature of his face.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OFFICER'S VOW.

"HAVE you never heard from *my mother*, Lord Kenmore, since the night of the wreck?"

Lord Kenmore started for he noted that the young officer called him Lord Kenmore at once, and spoke in the most natural manner of the wrecked woman as *his mother*.

The nobleman moved uneasily.

He saw that he would be forced to explain, and he began to feel already that his falsehood, to hide his sin, was beginning to weigh upon him.

But he struck upon a bright idea and said:

"You have heard that your nurse died suddenly, several years after your birth?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Well, her father was a man who followed the sea, and one day a boat drifted ashore near her home, and it had a sailor in it who was very ill.

"The nurse was at home at the time, and the poor fellow was taken good care of."

"But he died, and when he knew that he could not live he made this confession to the nurse, told her that he had been upon the wrecked vessel that night, and that Orlando was the captain."

"She asked him about the lady and her baby, and the sailor said that the lady and the baby had both gotten well, and Captain Orlando had taken them by night to their home in America, and landed them, receiving ransom for them."

"What else said the sailor, my lord?"

"Nothing more that the nurse reported to me, and soon after she died, and so it ends there."

"Not so, my lord."

Lord Kenmore started at the tone and words of the young man.

Not once while telling him the falsehood—for he had seized upon the dead nurse as the one to go back to for his information—did he look the man he was deceiving in the face.

"What do you mean, my son?" he asked, anxiously.

"Does that story satisfy you, sir?"

"What story?" gasped the nobleman.

"The sailor told the nurse that the lady and her child recovered?"

"Yes."

"And that this sea fiend, Orlando, had taken them home and received ransom for them?"

"Yes."

"And that is all you know, my lord?"

"Everything."

"Still you are content?"

"What more should I do?"

"The child with the lady, *my mother*, is your own daughter?"

"True, my son."

"I should think you would seek her out."

"Did I so, then your mother?"

"Pardon me, you refer to Lady Kenmore?"

"Yes, she would have to know the true state of affairs, and it might be her death."

"That is so, my lord; but I am not satisfied."

"Pray explain."

"Orlando's captive was *my mother*!"

"Yes."

"Then I am determined to find her."

"Oh, Crayon, what would you do?"

"I am not your son, sir?"

"No."

"You know this?"

"I do."

"You personally made the exchange of infants?"

"I did."

"And you alone know that I am not entitled to the title I wear?"

"Yes, so the secret is safe."

"You misunderstand me, my lord."

"How so?"

"The secret, for the sake of Lady Kenmore, and your sake, shall be kept; but I am not the son of Lady Kenmore and yourself."

"I am not one to wear a title not justly my own, and so I shall give up the one I am at present known by."

"Crayon, my son, you will destroy all," and Lord Kenmore was secretly rejoiced to hear the young man's decision, though he did not wish to have it known why he gave up his title.

"No, my lord, I shall do no wrong, no harm."

"I stand to-day between Colton and his title and estates, and I shall do so no longer."

"You have have known my liberal views since childhood, as far as Repulicanism is concerned, and it must be in my blood, my mother being an American, and I suppose my father too."

"You have known how I enjoyed my first cruise to America, and how much I admired the country and the people."

"Now I have risen rapidly in the royal navy, and it seems as though a bright future was before me; but knowing what I do I shall resign my comission, and—"

"Hold! Crayon, my son, do no such act."

"No, my lord, I shall act with thought, with justice, but I think and act rapidly, and I will no longer serve the king."

"As the future Lord Kenmore, it was all right: but as an American I prefer to go to my own country and dwell, and I shall do so."

"But you pledge to keep my secret?"

"I have not forgotten my pledge, nor shall I break it, my lord."

"What would you do, my son?"

After a few minutes of deep thought the young officer startled Lord Kenmore, so that he sprung to his feet in alarm when he heard the words, firmly uttered:

"Lord Kenmore, I shall hunt down Orlando, the Ocean Free Flag Rover—I vow it!"

CHAPTER XIV.

RENUCED.

"My heavens, Crayon! what would you do?" cried Lord Kenmore, in dire alarm, for he did not know just what the young officer would do.

It was strange to him that where Crayon had ever treated him and Lady Kenmore with deepest respect, and the love of a devoted son had been given them, while he was a brilliant, dashing, handsome lad, and had won his way up the ladder of fame, he had never won the place in the heart of his supposed parents which Colton had held.

Colton, on the other hand, had never been a very bright youth, and his nature was sullen, cruel and sneering.

He was a bully at home, even with his parents, and though entering the navy as a midshipman, thus holding an advantage over Crayon, who had gone before the mast, in his love of adventure, and hope to rise unaided, he had never won special mention for a gallant act, where his supposed brother had been rapidly promoted for his brave deeds.

Yet so it was that neither Lord Kenmore, or his wife, had given Crayon the place in their hearts that they had held for Colton.

Now, when brought face to face with the will and spirit of the young officer, Lord Kenmore saw that he was one to fear, and he trembled at what he might do.

"Do you mean what you say, my son?" he asked, in an anxious manner.

"I do, my lord; I shall run to earth this sea monster they call Orlando."

"But for what purpose?"

"I supposed you might have guessed, my lord; but I shall tell you."

"Pray do so."

"He held my mother captive, and received ransom for her return?"

"Yes."

"Then, naturally, he knows who my mother is, and where she is, and I have a desire to discover just who I am myself," and the last words were uttered in bitterness.

"No, Crayon, let the dead past alone, and let all be as it now is."

"Not, I sir, for I am not one to rob Sir Colton of his rights, or to sail under a false flag."

"But what can you do?"

"Listen, my lord, for, as I said, I think rapidly and act promptly."

"I am not your son, so am not Sir Crayon, and Colton is therefore your heir."

"I know not my parentage, so am determined to find out, and will do so."

"I am, from your account given me, an American, as my parents are before me."

"I have republican tendencies, and so it will be no hardship for me to become an American."

"I am an officer of the king as Sir Crayon Kenmore, but will no longer serve under false pretenses, so shall resign within the week."

"I shall also make known my firm determination to become an American citizen, and legally relinquish all claim in favor of Colton, to the title and estates to which I am now the presumptive heir."

"That I am not the heir is your secret and mine, my lord."

"Having done this I shall sail for America, and I happen to have due me, from prize-money on vessels captured among the Algerine, Moorish and Caribbean pirates, while I was an officer upon the Racer, a very snug sum of money, say some three thousand pounds."

"You have also been more than generous with me, my lord, and I shall not insult you by offering back the amount saved from your allowances, and Lady Kenmore's liberal remittances, so these will foot up, as I have not been over extravagant, to two thousand pounds more."

"Thus you will see that I will have as the Americans call it, twenty-five thousand dollars, no mean sum for a young man to have as a foundation to make his fortune with," and Crayon smiled.

"Ah, my son, what will Lady Kenmore and others say to all this?"

"Simply that I was one who preferred to drop a title and become a plain American, rather than remain a subject of the king."

"You are determined in this?"

"Wholly so, sir, and more, the lady I love has gone to America, is an American in fact, and she will not be disappointed, I believe, when she knows that she is not to marry a titled man."

"I am not so sure of that."

"I am, for I know her thoroughly."

"But you will surely let me endow you with a certain sum—"

"Not a pound, my lord, for I have no claim upon you, other than that you have ever been a kind father to me, and I have lived upon your bounty."

"What I have laid aside, and will draw as prize-money and back pay will give me the sum I mentioned."

"But what will you do in America, unknown, friendless and—"

"A man with money is never friendless, my lord, I have lived long enough to discover, while as for being alone I hope not to be so for a very long period."

"But what will you do?"

"I told you, sir, hunt down Orlando the Free Flag."

"A fruitless undertaking, my son," and yet Lord Kenmore spoke anxiously.

"I believe not, my lord."

"But, how can you do what our best captains have failed in, Crayon?"

"It is a long lane that has no turning, my lord, and the man deserves hanging and I shall be pleased to place the noose about his neck."

Lord Kenmore shuddered at the thought, remembering all that Orlando had told him.

"I shall," continued the young officer, "go to the United States, build and fit out a fleet vessel, with my money, arm and man her, and offer my services and my vessel and crew to the President as a special duty of running down Orlando the Free Flag."

"I believe that he will grant me the commission, under the circumstances."

"If he refuse?"

"Then, sir, I shall go to sea without a flag."

"Ah, Crayon, I fear the future holds only sorrow for you."

"I hope, sir, that it holds happiness, for if I become an American I shall be content, and it will be a joy to me to make Kathleen Kenneth my wife."

"If I capture and hang Orlando, the Sea Pest, I shall win fame, and I believe a commission in the United States Navy, while I will do an inestimable service to all merchant vessels in ridding the seas of such a monster."

"Then, too, by capturing Orlando, I will learn who my parents are, and have the joy of meeting them, if alive, or at least of knowing who they were if they have passed into the Shadow Land."

"Somehow, my lord, I feel as though I shall have no harm to dread, knowing who my parents are."

"Doubtless, as I told you, Crayon; but suppose Orlando refuse your request?"

"My lord, that is why I shall capture him alive, for he must tell me before he dies."

"But he may refuse?"

"My lord of Kenmore, if the pirate becomes my prisoner and refuses, unmindful of threats, then, so determined am I to know, that I will give even Orlando the Free Flag Rover his freedom to tell me the secret I would learn," was the determined response of the young officer.

Again Lord Kenmore shuddered. He realized now the will and spirit, the indomitable pluck of the youth who had so rapidly, and unaided won his way from the forecastle to the quarter-deck.

He thought he saw in him the same magnificent courage, lawless though it was, which had made his father, Orlando, a terror on the seas for over a score of years.

To attempt to reason Crayon out of his determination he knew was useless.

He was glad that his own son, Colton, would now become his heir, and he felt that the act of Crayon in resigning his title, estates, and commission and becoming an American he would receive no censure for; it would be looked upon as the mad freak of a boy, who would live to be sorry for what he had done.

In his heart he was happy at the thought, though he could but show deepest regret, and he could not but admire the splendid young officer for what he did, and swore to himself that his sense of honor was far keener than his own, though he was a pirate's son.

Again he tried to urge upon the youth to accept at least of a few thousand pounds from him, but, he was refused, though he did get Crayon's promise, if ever he was in need he would frankly write and ask him for aid.

Another thing troubled Lord Kenmore greatly.

His brother had yielded his claim, confessed himself willing to appear as dead, if he would consent to the marriage of Crayon with Kathleen Kenneth.

When Orlando discovered that Crayon had thrown away his title and estates, would he not resent it upon him, Lord Kenmore?

Might he not return and claim his own, for who, as the Sea Rover had said, knew him as a pirate personally?

Lord Kenmore again feared if Crayon captured Orlando that the secret would all come out, and that he had allowed the young officer to go upon the track of his own father.

With such thoughts in his brain and heart Lord Kenmore was by no means a happy man, and yet his pretended sorrow at the act of Crayon, would be an excuse for his looks, he well knew.

At last he said:

"Well, my son, let me break this news, this determination you have come to, to your mother—"

"To Lady Kathleen."

"Yes, but your mother until you leave."

"True, sir, and pray do not distress her, but put it in its best light, and I, my lord, will tell Colton," and the two walked leisurely toward the castle, each busy with his own thoughts.

CHAPTER XV.

A SURPRISE.

LADY KATHLEEN KENMORE heard what her husband had to say with a surprise that nearly took her breath away.

Lord Kenmore hastened to get the bottle of smelling-salts, fearing she would faint, but she rallied quickly, and said:

"Tell it to me all over again."

He did so, giving his version of the affair, to the effect that Sir Crayon had asked for an interview, to tell him that he was so thoroughly republican in his views as to wish to be an American.

To become such he renounced his title, estates, and would resign his commission, and with what moneys he had laid by would go to America to start alone in the world, leaving Colton to step into his shoes.

He had urged, argued, reasoned and appealed to Sir Crayon, but all in vain, for he was determined in his course, and Lord Kenmore recalled the fact that when he had proposed getting the two boys into the Royal Navy as middies, Sir Crayon had gone up to London and shipped before the mast upon a cruiser bound to the Americas, writing home that he determined to rise by his own exertions.

"Another such freak has seized him now," said Lady Kenmore.

That she felt deeply the intention of the one she deemed her eldest son there was no doubt; but Colton had been her idol, evil-natured as he was, and from whom she had received only indifferent respect.

But so it often is with parents.

The grief of Crayon's going, therefore, would be allayed by the fact that it made her yet the heir, and so after a few tears of regret and joy commingled, she resigned herself to the situation and sent for the young man.

She met him with tears, and urged him against his course, for when she looked into his manly, noble face she could not but recall the deep respect she had ever had from him, and how devoted he had ever been to her every wish.

But the youth painted his going in glowing colors, said that he would make fame and fortune for himself in the New World, and as plain Crayon Creighton, for he would retain the names given him in baptism, he could ask Kathleen Kenneth to marry him with better grace, as they would be of the same rank.

"And as Crayon Creighton she will never marry you, my son, for she sought to be Lady Kenmore."

"Therein you show, mother, that you do not know the woman to whom I have given my love, for I am sure she will be just as true when I have told her what I have done, as before."

Lady Kenmore shook her head, for she could not understand a woman being so very silly, viewed from her standpoint.

After telling Lady Kenmore that he had already written to the Admiralty, tendering his commission, and asking to have his prize-money allowance placed to his credit, he added that he would leave Castle Kenmore in just one week, which time he would spend in wandering over the scenes of his boyhood, bidding farewell to the neighboring gentry and the people, with whom he had always been a great favorite.

"I wish a hunt in the old forests, mother, a day of fishing in the brooks, and a ride across country once more on a fine hunter, and I will have put behind me the sports and joys of my boyhood, and have said farewell to Kenmore, the dear old home I have loved so well," and as his voice choked up, he kissed Lady Kenmore and hastened from the room.

As he went to his rooms he met Colton, who said, quickly:

"I just saw Terry, and he tells me you sent an official paper to the post, which you said was the resignation of your commission."

"He told you the truth, Colton."

"Then while I slave it at sea, you will remain at home, and lord it over the castle?"

"Oh! the curse of being a younger brother!"

"Colton, come into my room, and I'll tell you just what I intend to do."

"Why make a long story of it? Tell me here."

"I will not; come into my room."

There was something in the tone and look which caused Colton to silently obey.

"Well?" he said, throwing himself into the most comfortable chair.

"Colton," and Crayon leaned against the window, his arms folded, and looked Colton straight in the face.

"Ever since you were old enough to know the curse of being the younger son of a nobleman, you have hated me."

"You have treated me with a manner of contempt which in any other I would have been quick to resent."

"You have insulted me in public, before our brother officers and the men, and I bore all in patience because you were my brother."

"But I have felt, the while, and you have taken out of my heart every atom of brotherly love I held for you, so that you are to me as one whom I hold not even the claim of friendship upon."

"What is the good of this lecture, Sir Crayon?"

"Listen, for it is the last time that I hope ever to cross your path, after I leave Castle Kenmore one week from to-day."

"Leave Kenmore?"

"Yes, for I am too republican in my views to remain an Englishman and wear a title I have not won by my own acts."

"With such views I resigned my commission in the Royal Navy, and to-day I had a talk with Lord Kenmore, our father, telling him that I was going to America to make it my home."

Colton could hardly believe his senses, and gasped forth:

"Going to America?"

"Yes, I have renounced verbally, and will legally, when the attorney arrives, all right, title and claim to the inheritance of Kenmore, its titles and all that goes with it."

"I leave all for you, so that you will be known, once I leave this castle, as Sir Colton, the future Lord of Kenmore."

"What are you telling me all this ghost

story for?" cried Colton, trembling with hope and fear combined.

"It is the truth, as Lord Kenmore and Lady Kenmore will tell you if you seek them."

"You are the greatest fool I ever knew, if you do; but decidedly glad I am that you are such an idiot, and I only fear you are in delirium and will change your mind when you come to your senses."

"No, sir, I shall stick to my resolve throughout."

"Of course that girl will cut you adrift now, so what will you do?"

"That, Colton, future Lord of Kenmore, is none of your affair, and I beg you not to meddle in what does not concern you."

"I have told you my resolve, and in one week I leave Kenmore."

"Until then you shall treat me with proper respect."

"Now you can go."

And like a whipped cur Colton Kenmore left the room, for he felt the presence of his master—the worm had turned upon him at last.

CHAPTER XVI.

LYING IN WAIT.

COLTON KENMORE could hardly believe his good fortune, until he saw his father's yacht sail away from the little harbor with Crayon on board.

Lord Kenmore had determined that Crayon should go to London in his yacht, and to force him to do so, decided to accompany him that far upon his journey.

The farewell between Crayon and Lady Kenmore was a touching one, for the woman's heart was touched at the last to feel the difference between the one who was leaving her, the one who was to remain.

The attendants of the castle who felt their grief and showed it, and many of the gentry for miles around, and their families had ridden over to Castle Kenmore to wish a last good-by to the strange youth who was throwing aside of his own will a vast fortune and a proud title, not to speak of the honor of holding a king's commission, merely to become an American.

Colton had stepped forward at the last moment and said:

"Well, Crayon, I offer you my hand, for I owe much to you being such a fool."

"And your hand I refuse, Sir Colton Kenmore, for I am not a hypocrite," was the answer, and Crayon Creighton, as he now called himself, stepped into the waiting boat and was rowed on board the yacht, a pretty little schooner of sixty tons.

Away sped the pretty craft on her voyage, and with fair winds made a rapid run into the Thames and up to London.

Crayon sought, through Lord Kenmore, an interview with the king, and tendered the decorations bestowed upon him.

"You won them, sir, for your daring, so keep them, and your king regrets that an officer who has risen as you have in his service, finds it necessary to resign his rank, throw away his inheritance, and give up his citizenship as an Englishman."

Crayon saw that the king was angry with him for what he did, so bowed in silence and left his presence.

But it was upon board the Racer that he had the hardest struggle, for the officers were returning to duty, and Captain Rathburn stormed at him savagely for his act, and ended by wishing him every good fortune in the world, and adding:

"And, my boy, if life shows you its dark side, and you need a friend, come to Trenchard Rathburn; but I predict for you a brilliant career, for I know you well, and we will all hear some day, whatever flag you sail under, the name of Crayon Creighton."

Hoping to find the Kennetts still at their home, Crayon took Lord Kenmore's yacht, for the nobleman was to remain some weeks in London, and ran down to the little port.

But he was told that the Kennetts had sold their home and had sailed a week before, going no one knew whither, but Rupert Farnsworth, his informant, suggested the idea that they had gone to America, and asked for a berth upon the Racer.

"You shall have it, my man, for the asking, as I know Captain Rathburn will be glad to have you, and, if you can get ready in a couple of hours, you can return with me."

"I will be ready, sir, within an hour—soon as I've said good-by to the old folks," was the reply, and, when the yacht sailed an hour after, Rupert Farnsworth was at her helm, and he

found Captain Rathburn glad to give him a berth, and, at Crayon's request, he was made a gunner.

With his little fortune transferred into bills of exchange on New York, Crayon Creighton soon after bade farewell to Lord Kenmore, who was deeply moved at the parting, and went on board the fine clipper ship on which he had engaged passage to New York, and which was one of the "ocean greyhounds" of that day.

His brave heart never faltered as he saw the shores of England drop from sight astern, for the future was before him to build upon and he had a nerve to meet any fate.

One night he was on deck, the fleet clipper skimming swiftly along under easy canvas, and urged by a ten-knot breeze.

It was dark and no sail was in sight, and the captain had said that day at table that if the wind held fair two days more they would sight the Highlands of Navesink.

Suddenly the keen eye of the young sailor became fixed dead ahead, and taking a glass he wore swinging to his belt he leveled it.

"Captain Cross, pardon me, but I have heard no one report a sail in sight."

"No, Mr. Creighton, for no sail is in sight," said the captain, who had taken a great fancy to the young sailor.

"I beg pardon again, sir, but dead ahead, directly in your course, lies a large schooner under bare poles, and if I mistake not she is armed and lying in wait for you."

The captain seized his glass and leveling it an instant, said:

"By the king's crown, but you are right, sir. Ho, aloft! are you asleep there, that you allow us to run on a pirate, for that fellow can be nothing else?"

"All hands on deck to make sail, and stand by all to go about!"

Quickly the crew sprung to their posts, and at a command from the captain the clipper swept around, a position which brought the wind abeam, and away she went upon her starboard course, while the men were sent aloft to spread more sail.

And none too soon had the schooner been sighted, for she was not a mile away when the ship went about, and that she was lying in wait for big game was proved by seeing her sails run up and her prow pointed in chase.

"Captain Cross?"

"Yes, Mr. Creighton."

"I know that craft."

"Well, sir, he's a pirate is he not?"

"Yes sir, it is the Sea Imp, the vessel of Orlando the Free Flag Rover."

CHAPTER XVII.

A HOT CHASE.

CAPTAIN CROSS fully appreciated the keen vision of the young ex-officer of the Royal Navy, which had saved him from running his vessel upon a pirate craft, whose speed was known as well as was the desperate character of her commander.

He knew who the young man was, and that he had given up title, fortune and rank to become an American, and the captain being an American himself appreciated the honor to his country.

The ship was what was known in those days as a "Baltimore Clipper," and they were as famous for speed as the Ocean Greyhounds, Etruria, City of Paris and Umbria are to-day as steamers; in fact that they made better time often across the ocean than do the "Tramp Steamers" of to-day.

She was a large vessel of nine hundred tons burden, rigged like a frigate and could spread canvas enough for a small fishing fleet.

Her name was the Winged Messenger, and she had a record under her gallant captain which no other ocean flyer had thus far reached.

On account of her speed she was a favorite with travelers, and her passenger list on that voyage numbered seventy people, among them a United States admiral returning home on sick leave, a minister to a foreign court crossing back for a formal interview with the President, and a number of other prominent Americans.

The story of the young English officer had leaked out, but as he held himself aloof, not wishing to attract comment, hardly any one had spoken with him.

Now when the Winged Messenger was flying along from pursuit, Captain Cross had time for a chat with the young passenger, and said:

"So you recognize yonder fellow, do you, Mr. Creighton?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have good eyes."

"They have been well trained by some years of service, sir."

"And you think the fellow is Orlando the Free Flag?"

"I am sure of it, sir."

"All those rakish buccaneer craft are so much alike."

"True; but I have a very remarkable glass here, which please glance through at the schooner, and you will see that his masts are single sticks, and he carries a third one stepped aft at his taffrail and movable, with an outrigger to run the sheet rope through."

"I saw him first on the African Coast a year ago, and he lay in sight of us becalmed all day."

"At night we moved down in our boats to attack him, when Satan got up a breeze for his especial benefit and he ran off, and not a breath of air did the Racer receive."

"We saw him again off the coast of France some two months ago, and chased him to the English Coast, losing him one night when he was almost in our grasp, by his splendid firing which crippled us and put the Racer out of the chase."

"That craft, sir, is Orlando's Sea Imp."

The captain had listened to every word, while he at the same time looked steadily through the glass.

"You are right, Mr. Creighton, the fellow has the peculiarities you speak of, and more, he is holding his own with the Messenger, swift as she is."

"Oh, he's a rapid flyer, captain, as I know, for the Racer is the fleetest cruiser in the Royal Navy, and she never could creep up an inch upon the Sea Imp, blow light or heavy."

"Mr. Creighton?"

"Well, captain."

"I would like to ask a favor of you, sir."

"Certainly."

"My first officer is laid up, as you know, with a broken leg, and I would ask if you will lend me your valuable aid, sir, until we throw off that fellow?"

"Gladly, sir, for I am getting rusty for want of work."

"You go off at eight bells, midnight?"

"Yes, but—"

"I will relieve you, sir."

"I have a rig in my cabin, Mr. Creighton, which—"

"Thanks, captain, but I am well-fitted, having brought my sea-costume along, and I'll catch some rest, and then do it."

"But yonder fellow is still holding his own."

"I see he is, sir."

Crayon Creighton then went below to his state-room, and after several hours' sleep arose, exchanged his citizen's suit for a very stylish sea-costume, but devoid of rank, and with his natty tarpaulin, he certainly looked very handsome.

The night had passed with the vessels holding the same relative position to each other, and it had gotten out that the Messenger had been headed off her course by a pirate, and was in full flight, so that soon after dawn the passengers began to come on deck.

They were surprised to see the silent, handsome young passenger in charge of the ship, he having gone on duty a short while before.

The wind began to freshen with the rising of the sun, and its force began to shove the two vessels along faster.

"Mr. Ralph, yonder fellow has just his wind, and is gaining, so we must spread more canvas," said Crayon Creighton to the third mate, who was also on duty, for the clipper carried a captain, four mates, and forty men in crew, independent of her cabin force of stewards.

"Ay, ay, sir."

Then rung out, in a voice that reached the forecastle, the clear tones of the young Englishman issuing his orders, and they sent the men flying into the rigging.

The admiral was on deck, and smiled as he heard the voice and orders, while he said to the foreign minister:

"That young man is a perfect seaman, just my idea of a beau ideal officer—hark! how his voice rings, and he knows just what to say, and says it."

"I am glad Cross got him to aid him."

The same impression was made upon the other passengers, while Creighton, all unconscious of the admiration he won, went on with his duties in his prompt, seamanlike manner, and soon had the ship heeling well to the breeze and fairly flying along.

He watched her closely for a few minutes, and then ordered certain changes made, and the result was at once evident in increased speed.

The schooner had meanwhile set all of her

canvas that would draw, and still held her own as steadily as before.

But a close survey through the glass showed Crayon that she did not gain an inch, simply held her position.

"You handle a vessel beautifully, sir," said the admiral addressing the young sailor.

A salute was promptly given and then came the modest answer:

"Thank you, sir; but I was schooled in the British Navy, and there they make a machine out of a man."

"True, with brains to work upon.

"You were an officer, I believe, in the Royal Navy?"

"I went, sir, from forecastle to quarter-deck, ending as a lieutenant."

"Pardon, me, sir, but there is a rumor aboard this ship that you resigned title and commission to go to America and become a citizen."

"It is interest, not curiosity, that prompts my asking the question if it is true?"

"Yes, sir, my tastes are republican, and I desire to become an American."

The admiral felt that there was some other cause, some secret reason that lay beneath the surface, but did not say so.

But he mused to himself:

"Can a man with his face have been guilty of wrong which his high rank as a noble prevented from being made known, and he be recently dismissed the service and debarred from his title?"

"I cannot believe it of him, yet there is more mystery at the bottom of his act I am convinced," and the admiral joined the minister and went down to breakfast in the cabin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A TIRELESS PURSUER.

The deck of the Winged Messenger was crowded all day long with her passengers.

There were handsome women and brave men, and a bevy of pretty girls and children, and all seemed to admire the handsome young officer when at noon he came on duty again, for he and the captain had agreed to do double duty on the quarter-deck, while the pirate was in chase, leaving the other officers to look out forward.

The two vessels still held their relative positions, and all eyes were turned upon the young officer as he came on deck and relieved the captain at noon.

He saluted the admiral and the minister, raised his tarpaulin to several ladies who bowed to him, swept his eyes over the ship from deck to trucks and then leveled his glass at the schooner, just half a league astern.

An instant only did he look, and though his face did not change, all saw that he had made some discovery.

"Mr. Ralph."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"What do you consider your ship's best point of sailing?"

"With the wind over the stern quarter, sir, she can make a knot more an hour than before it, or with the breeze abeam."

"It may also be the schooner's best point; but we will try it, Mr. Ralph," and the necessary orders were given.

The changed course naturally would bring her a little nearer the schooner if the latter held on, and maintain relative positions if the latter also made the change.

But even the passengers noted that the clipper began to drop the schooner, which did not change her course as the ship did.

"You observed that she was gaining, sir?" said the admiral.

"Yes, sir, she had crept up a quarter of a mile since I went off duty."

"The ship is sailing a knot faster."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Ralph says that this is her best point; but if we can keep the pirate where he is we shall be able to drop him after nightfall."

"How do you mean, Mr. Creighton?"

"The barometer is falling, sir."

"Ahl there will be a blow by night, as you say," and the admiral cast his eyes out over the sea and skies, and he added:

"When it comes to a rough sea, as you meant, we can drop him easily."

"Yes, sir, we can have the advantage with our large hull in a heavy sea; but I have seen that fellow sail in rough weather and he cuts along at a terrific pace."

"Still we can gain then, for I shall, if on duty, put her under all she will stand."

"You are right sir, and permit me to compliment you again upon your seamanship."

The schooner now changed her course, and began to hold her own once more.

The better glimpse gotten of her, showed

her to be a large schooner, very long in hull, broad aft of amidships, and with high bow and stern.

She showed open ports seven to a side, and two pivot guns, one forward, one aft, and evidently of large caliber.

Her masts were two single sticks, very lofty, and the space between fore and mainmast enabled her to spread a very large foresail, while her bowsprit was of enormous length and could be run inboard at need.

Upon her stern was stepped a jigger mast, with an out-rigger, and this enabled her to spread a sail nearly as large as her foresail, while she carried a yard for a fore square-sail.

With the wind over her stern starboard quarter, as it then was, she was fairly covered with canvas and held the fleet Winged Messenger as steadily as before her change of course, though the change had increased the speed of both a knot and a half an hour.

The clipper was under every stitch of canvas that would catch a capful of wind, and sent the spray flying from her bows, and left a snowy wake astern as a track for the schooner to follow, it seemed.

Crayon Creighton paced the deck quietly, though his eyes were never still, and the men had long before discovered that he was master of the quarter-deck, and compliments upon his skill and nerve were freely passed about among the crew.

The admiral watched him with the deepest interest, and mentally made up his mind that if there was no crime behind his leaving England, he would use his influence to get him into the American Navy.

"As he says, he is a trained machine, and a splendid one, too; but he has brains and nerve with it, and he knows the duty of every man from forecastle hand to captain."

"Just mark the difference when Cross is on duty, good sailor that he is, for the men behave differently, act promptly, and salute like men-of-war's-men, and he makes every rope and foot of canvas do duty."

This was said to the minister, and seeing the admiral perfectly satisfied all the passengers were content that the ship was in splendid hands.

As Creighton had predicted, when night came on the weather became stormy, and many of the passengers were driven below.

Crayon came on duty again after dark, and he saw that the sea was rising and the wind increasing to a gale.

The captain had taken in his topsails, and the admiral watched the young officer as he noted the fact and took a look at the schooner.

Then came the command to reset the upper sails, and, as Captain Cross shook his head, Creighton said:

"Now is our time, sir, to drop him, if ever, and this ship can stand every inch of her canvas."

"The fellow has crept up, Captain Cross, since I went off duty, fully a quarter of a mile."

"I noticed it, and my mates frankly told me that he never gained while you had the ship."

"I kept my eye constantly on the men at the wheel, never letting them take their look off the compass, and watched the braces closely, that is all, sir."

"The ship is in your hands, sir, so let us shake that devil off if we can."

The increased sail began to drive the ship along at a terrific pace, and a cheer broke from the crew as they saw how rapidly they were dropping the schooner, which was pressing on under a cloud of canvas which staggered her in the heavy seas, which were also becoming heavier each moment.

"We are dropping him, sir, and he will doubtless open fire on us; but go below and turn in, captain, and if I need you I will send for you."

Captain Cross went below to his supper, and was about to turn in when a deep boom reached his ears and a shot flew just over the decks of the ship.

He hastened on deck, and saw that the ship was heeling far over under her pressure of canvas and rushing furiously along.

The passengers were grouped together close to the windward bulwarks, and Crayon Creighton stood by the wheel conning the vessel and watching all with the eyes of an eagle.

The schooner had been dropped half a mile nearly, and seeing that the ship was out-stepping her bad opened fire to cripple her.

Such was the situation, and Captain Cross felt very anxious for his ship when he saw how matters stood.

"If the pirate don't cripple us, that reckless

youth will run her under," he muttered, for the captain was a very cautious man and never strained his vessel carrying sail.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FATAL SHOT.

"DON'T you think, Mr. Creighton, you are driving the good ship a trifle too hard?" asked the captain, and the admiral overheard the question.

"No, sir, for she's as stiff as a ship of the line and buoyant as a cork, so does not labor in the least."

"But her sticks?"

"Are all right, sir, as long as she is not staggering."

"I am a little afraid of her."

"I am more afraid of that fellow astern, sir, for Orlando the Ocean Free Flag has never been known to show mercy to man or woman, and you have a number of passengers on board, not to speak of a very valuable cargo."

"If you could muster a hundred men, captain, I would say fight him, though he has a desperate crew, and fully four-score in number, if not more."

"No, no, I fear to fight him would be madness, for we cannot muster seventy men, and not half of these were ever under fire— Ah! he is firing again."

Another shot flew close to the deck, and the men at the wheel dodging, allowed the ship to reel at a terrible angle.

"We must take in canvas, Mr. Creighton," urged the captain, as a chorus of shrieks arose from the lady passengers.

"The ship is in your hands, Captain Cross."

"No! not for the world would I wish you to give up command, Mr. Creighton; but she has far too much canvas to be safe."

"Yonder comes a worse danger, sir," and stepping up to the two men at the wheel Creighton drew a pistol from his belt and said sternly:

"Men, your fear caused this ship to very nearly lose her sticks, and if you move under another fire from the pirate, I shall shoot you dead, so beware!"

"Bravo!" came from the admiral, which checked the idea that the ladies had formed that the young officer was cruel.

Another shot then came, and the wheelmen did not move an inch; but a cry of horror went up as the shot tore along the decks and the poor captain sunk dead in his tracks.

"Ho, lads, remove this body, and be lively."

"All hands ahoy to set sail!" cried Creighton, and several more sail were set upon the flying, reeling ship.

"Get those guns and water-casks to windward!" came the next order, and the four larboard guns of the clipper were hauled up to windward, along with the water-casks, extra spars and all else that would fetch her upon a more level keel.

The result was at once apparent, for the ship did not reel so wildly, and she flew along at an increased speed.

The passengers would not go below without force, so were all kept up to windward with the crew, and the schooner, seeing her prey which she had been so sure of, escaping her, began to fire rapidly, to cripple her.

The heavy seas now checked the advance of the schooner in a great degree, and she was being dropped rapidly, and a crippling was all the clipper had to fear.

Crayon Creighton took the helm himself, with the best quartermaster on the ship to aid him, and the clipper boomed along at a terrific pace.

Hotter and hotter grew the fire of the schooner, but in the rough sea aim was out of the question, and it would be a chance shot that struck her.

But chance shots did strike, and hit hard, too, for the mizzen-topmast was cut away, another shot brought the flying jib down at a run, and three shots tore along the decks, killing the second mate and two seamen.

Another killed a passenger, wounded another, and two of the crew.

But still the brave young commander stood unflinchingly at the wheel, his eyes roaming over his vessel, and with never a glance astern at his foe.

Near him, clinging to the taffrail, stood the admiral, silent, offering no word of advice, but as watchful as a hawk.

More rapid became the fire from the schooner, but the shots soon flew wholly wild, and then began to fall short.

"You have run out of range, sir," said the admiral, coolly, as the fifth shot fell short.

"Yes sir; the ship is in no danger now; but

as soon as I dare I will shorten sail, as the ladies seem to be so alarmed."

"Yes, but as you say, not until you dare do so, for better their alarm than for that fellow to creep up in range once more."

"So I thought, sir, and acted accordingly; but how sad the death of poor Captain Cross."

"Sad, indeed, my young friend; but let me here say to you that as true a sailor as Captain Cross undoubtedly was, had he been in command we would never have escaped that pirate, for he did not dare press his ship as you have, nor did I believe she would stand it."

"I noticed her great draught, sir, and learned that she had a very solid cargo below the water line, while her spars and rigging are the very best, so I was sure she would stand all I could put on her."

"I believe we have dropped the pirate out of sight, admiral, so I will slowly shorten sail; but I would have given much to be able to fight him, for that is the very craft I am going to America to run down."

"Indeed?" asked the admiral with interest.

But Crayon Creighton made no reply until he had ordered the upper sails taken in and shortened the lower sails, for the pirate was now out of sight astern.

Then he changed the course of the clipper, putting her directly away before the gale, which would head her, from her then position, almost directly for New York.

Then trimming ship and placing half a dozen lookouts on duty to watch for the pirate, so if seen, the flight could be renewed once more, he again stood near the admiral, who had watched him closely.

"You were saying, Captain Creighton, that you were going to America to hunt down Orlando the Free Flag?"

"Yes, admiral, I am going to America, to become a citizen; but it is my intention to build a vessel, own and equip her at my own expense, unless I can find one already built to my liking, and then personally apply to the President for a commission to go pirate-hunting, Orlando and his Sea Imp being my biggest game."

"This is certainly a most praiseworthy intention, and I not only encourage you in it, but shall present your claims personally to the President."

"You saved this vessel, Captain Creighton, first by preventing her from running on the pirate in the darkness, as Captain Cross told me, and in your handling the clipper in the flight, and which has been most masterly seamanship. Upon this vessel, sir, the Government has a very large sum in bullion, gotten from England in payment of certain claims, the ship has a rich cargo besides, and her passengers are well supplied, so you have saved very large fortunes, sir, and I believe I can almost pledge you the commission you seek."

Crayon Creighton was delighted at his success, and felt that he had in the admiral a very warm friend.

The next day the schooner was nowhere in sight, the ship was hove to and the dead buried, after which all repairs were made, and the clipper went flying along upon her way to port.

Land was sighted at sunset, and then the passengers assembled on deck, the crew were mustered, and the admiral, in behalf of all, personally presented a written testimonial of thanks, signed by every one on the vessel, to the young officer, to whom all felt that they owed their safety.

Though deeply touched, Crayon made a very pretty speech, saying that he had always thought he had been born under a lucky star, and to make so many good friends by a single act of duty, convinced him that his star was in the ascendant.

The next day the ship dropped anchor off the New York wharves, and Crayon made his report to her owners, who promptly offered him the permanent command of the beautiful vessel.

But this he declined with thanks, and bidding a hasty farewell to his new-found friends, soon after found himself in pleasant rooms in one of the large hotels in the even then great city.

CHAPTER XX.

A HOME BY THE SEA.

In a handsome old house, a league from a seaport in the State of South Carolina, Mrs. Kenneth had found an abiding-place with her daughter.

It was not their former home, when in America, for Captain Kenneth had preferred that they go not back to the same place to dwell, and so had purchased this one through an agent.

It had been the abode of a wealthy planter who had inherited it from two generations before him, and it had been built with every view to comfort and enjoyment.

There was a grand lawn in front, dotted with majestic trees, and a gravel walk, bordered by flower-beds, wound down to the waters of a small inlet, or bay, an arm of the sea a league distant.

The white sandy shores of this bay, with the massive background of forests, and the bit of sea beyond, formed a very pretty picture.

The mansion was but one story in height, of white stucco, with encircling piazzas, and had been purchased fully furnished, along with a dozen slaves, the remnant of a once large force, for the planter had become a gambler and spendthrift, and had thus sacrificed the handsome inheritance he had received.

The out-buildings and servants' quarters in the rear were pretty structures, and the fences and grounds had been well kept up.

But Mrs. Kenneth was content to let the vast fields remain idle, while she cultivated only enough for her household wants.

There were horses and carriages in the stables, grand drives, pleasant walks through the woodlands and a pretty ten-ton yacht and boats.

Game abounded in the woods, and a negro sportsman was kept busy hunting and fishing for the table.

A large library was in the mansion, a harp and guitar, so that the mother and daughter had an ideal home, the planter letting all go for a cash sum which Captain Kenneth had been glad to give.

The newcomers had arrived so quietly that the neighbors hardly knew of their coming until they had been several days located.

Then the neighboring families called upon the new owners of Sealaws, and found them most charming people, but very retired as to their former life.

That they were ladies, all knew, and the young planters at once fell desperately in love with Kathleen, who rode beautifully, handled the yacht with its black crew of two men with consummate skill, and, rifle in hand, was often seen in the woodlands, where she could bring down a squirrel with any marksman in the country.

It was rumored that the Kennedys were very rich, and that a large cash sum had been paid for Sealaws indicated as much.

They wore fine jewels, dressed with elegance and perfect taste, and the well-trained negro servants purchased with Sealaws, gave them an excellent character, something worth having from one's help, as many people fully appreciate.

But there seemed to be a mystery hanging over the Kennedys, the curtain of which neither the mother or daughter seemed inclined to raise.

They simply said that they were Americans, had lived long abroad, and taking a fancy to return to America, Captain Kenneth had purchased Sealaws for them as a home.

But where was Captain Kenneth?

That was a question all asked.

He was a sea-captain, and consequently little at home, and no more was known of him.

But it seemed strange to busybodies that a sea-captain could purchase so fine a home for his wife and daughter, and pay cash for it, too.

But hereon no explanation was offered by the two dwellers at Sealaws, and no one dared venture probing too deep, for there was that in the faces of the mother and daughter to forbid it.

Their bills were promptly paid, they bought what they wished, and so no one dared try to solve the mystery by impudent inquiry.

Neither Mrs. Kenneth or Kathleen encouraged an intimate friendship, however.

They treated all politely, returned their visits in a formal way, and declined many invitations to sociable gatherings, though they were by no means haughty or rude.

Mrs. Kenneth's manner seemed to show that she had some sorrow in the past, and wished to indulge it as much as possible alone in her home.

Between the mother and daughter a perfect love and understanding existed, and the servants became very much attached to their new mistresses, and wondering if they would like the master as well when he came.

One night of storm a vessel stood into the inlet in a way that showed the one at the helm knew the channel.

The water was of good depth, and the vessel ran close inshore near the little pier of Sealaws and dropped anchor.

Then a boat put off for the shore with a single occupant and landed at the pier.

A cloaked form strode slowly up toward the mansion in which lights were visible, for it was early in the evening.

"A pretty spot indeed, and I always liked it when I visited Planter Craft here," muttered the visitor.

He ascended the steps of the piazza and let the heavy brass knocker fall sharply twice, and then after a lapse of a few seconds, three times.

Mrs. Kenneth sat in the spacious library with Kathleen, the latter reading aloud.

Both started at the knock, and Mrs. Kenneth hastened to the door saying:

"It is your father!"

"I will open the door, Pompey," said Mrs. Kenneth to the negro butler who was coming through the hall aroused by the knock.

"And, Pompey, have refreshments ready at once, for I am sure that it is Captain Kenneth."

Pompey darted away to obey and report to the kitchen brigade that "old massa has come."

"My good wife, I am home again, for wherever you are is my home, chance it as often as you may," said Captain Kenneth, stepping into the hall and greeting his wife affectionately.

"You are ever gallant in your speeches, Orlando; but welcome to our new home," responded Mrs. Kenneth, as the captain hung his cloak and hat up in the hall and followed her into the library where Kathleen sprung forward to greet him.

She dearly loved this handsome, generous, ever kind father of hers, though she had to confess to feeling an awe of him too.

The captain sat down by the blazing log fire, for the spring nights were cool, and looked very handsome in his sailor costume.

He carried a morocco case with him, and opening it displayed his gifts for his wife and daughter, and they were rare and costly gifts too.

Soon Pompey entered and announced supper, and Captain Kenneth shook him by the hand most warmly and told him that if he and the other servants took good care of his wife and daughter, when he returned again he would bring them each and all handsome presents, and as a token of good will be gave him a handful of gold-pieces to divide among all on the place.

Pompey divided them—I may as well say just here—but if he did not get the lion's share, no one else did, and it was a coincidence that the number of gold-pieces were just one apiece after Pompey's division, for each servant at Sealaws, though how many over for himself he never told, and always affirmed that the "Massa" had said:

"How many are you, all told, Pomp?"

"Just thirteen, sab, counting Maria's piccaninny."

"Then here are just thirteen gold-pieces."

Such was Pompey's story, and it was believed, as why should the master give a handful of gold away?

The captain ate heartily, drank several glasses of the rare old wine bought in the cellar with the place, said that he would put a few boxes ashore in the boat-house, to be brought up in the morning, and then expressed his determination to sail again within a couple of hours, as important business called him away on a southern cruise.

And two hours after Captain Kenneth set sail, and when the storm cleared away and the day dawned cloudless, afar off in the horizon was seen a tiny white sail marking his vessel, and as Kathleen gazed at it she asked her mother, who sat with her upon the piazza after breakfast:

"Mother, why is it that father comes so very seldom to see us, and then always upon a stormy night, and never remains but a few hours?"

"His life is a strange one, my child, and his duties demand all his time."

"I wish he would give up the sea and come home to live, for he must be very rich, even though he is a sea-captain, for the necklace of diamonds he brought me is worth a fortune, mother, and how beautiful and rare are the gems he brought you, while the velvets, silks, and laces sent in these boxes are fit for a queen."

"He knew you would need a handsome trousseau, Kathleen, and so remembered you."

"He is ever so kind; but see, his vessel is coming back, for the sail has risen fast."

"I am so glad."

Mrs. Kenneth glanced at the sail, then arose, and taking a spyglass from its bracket, leveled it at the distant vessel.

Her face paled as she did so, and she murmured, yet not loud enough for Kathleen to catch her words:

"Yes, he is coming back because he has been headed off by a cruiser that is in chase."

CHAPTER XXI.

TRUE AS STEEL.

THE mother resumed her seat, but kept her glass in hand, while her fancy-work remained untouched in her lap.

Kathleen watched the coming sail until her bright young eyes caught sight of the one in chase, and she said:

"Mother, there is another vessel, and she is following father's schooner."

"I see it, my child."

"What can bring father back again, I wonder?"

Mrs. Kenneth made no reply, and soon after Kathleen cried:

"Mother, there is a second vessel, yes and a third."

Mrs. Kenneth started and leveled her glass.

She then saw what had caused the schooner to put back and not attempt to dash on to sea past the stranger.

It was that three vessels were almost in a line, and the nature of the coast there was such that they had the schooner hemmed in.

They were about a mile apart, almost in a line, the two end vessels being perhaps nearer inshore, and the schooner was about a league away from its nearest foe.

Mrs. Kenneth looked troubled, and Kathleen took the glass.

"Mother?"

"Yes?"

"That cannot be father's schooner after all, for that craft is armed and crowded with men."

"I noticed that, my child."

"And mother, the vessel just astern of the one we thought father's craft is also a schooner, though, if I am not greatly mistaken, she has three masts."*

"It can hardly be, my child."

"Yes, mother, for the wind has headed them dead off, they have begun to beat to windward, and I can see her distinctly now—she has *three masts*, is armed, and not much larger than the schooner we thought was father's."

"It looks like a sea chase," ventured Mrs. Kenneth.

"It does, indeed," and Kathleen turned her glass upon the vessel to the right.

"Mother, that is a sloop-of-war."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, mother, and the one on the left is a large brig-of-war."

"Three against one," murmured Mrs. Kenneth.

"And the three vessels all fly the American flag."

"And the leading one?" quickly asked Mrs. Kenneth.

"She has no colors set," replied Kathleen after a close look at her through the glass.

As the vessels had now begun to beat to windward their approach was slow.

Before they had had the wind off the sea, but it had suddenly switched around from landward, and when the leading schooner was fully seven miles away from the shore.

Dinner was announced by Pompey, but both mother and daughter seemed to have lost their appetite, and were soon again out upon the piazza.

The wind had lightened, and the leading schooner was yet a league away, with the other vessels nearly as far astern.

The shadows had begun to lengthen, and Mrs. Kenneth's face brightened, from some reason unknown to Kathleen.

When darkness fell the leading schooner was close inshore and standing on a tack that would bring her into the bay, or inlet on which Sealaws was situated.

The other vessels had closed in, and with a wind which had now beaten around once more to seaward, were not over a mile and a half away, one of them the three-masted schooner having beaten the others badly and being within a quarter of a league of the craft which it was now evident that they were pursuing.

The skies became overcast with the going down of the sun, and the night came on so dark that after the schooner entered the inlet she could not be seen.

Thus several hours passed away, and the ladies had retired to the library, when a firm, quick step upon the piazza was heard, followed by a sharp tap as from the hilt of a sword, for in the darkness the brass knocker could not be seen.

Mrs. Kenneth gave a sigh of relief at the knock, and allowed Pompey to go to the door,

* In those days a three-masted schooner was almost unknown.

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and he ushered into the library an officer in full uniform.

"Sir Crayon Kenmore!" cried Kathleen, springing forward with joy in her face.

He greeted Kathleen and her mother in his courtly, pleasant way, and then in answer to what brought him there, and in the uniform of the United States Navy, he laughed lightly, and said:

"Let me first tell you that I was headed here when I sighted two American cruisers, who signaled that Orlando, the Ocean Free Flag Rover, was upon the coast somewhere, and they were in search of him.

"Just then we sighted a sail, his vessel, standing seaward, and we started for him and drove him into your bay here just after dark.

"Our three cruisers are anchored outside, so that there is no escape for him, and I came in, partially on a reconnaissance, and mostly to see you, for your letter to New York told me where to find you, and a coast pilot I have with me pointed out your house, which he knew under its former owner."

"How strange that when you visited us in England, you were in chase of Orlando, the Free Flag Rover, and what is a real coincidence, at that time my father had just visited us, and when we saw the schooner putting back, we supposed it was his vessel."

"It is strange, Miss Kathleen, and I regret not being able to meet your father, for I wished to particularly see him."

"I hope you will some day; but, tell me now, Sir Crayon, how we find you in an American uniform?"

"In the first place, Miss Kathleen, let me tell you that I am no longer Sir Crayon Kenmore, of the Royal Navy, but plain Lieutenant Crayon Creighton, of the navy of the United States, and on special duty, which duty is pirate-hunting, with a strong leaning toward Orlando, the Ocean Free Flag."

"You are in the American Navy, and no longer Sir Crayon?" asked Kathleen.

"It is a fact, for I was such an American at heart that I gave up legally my title and estates of Kenmore, resigned my commission, gathered what cash I had laid by, and bidding farewell to Castle Kenmore and its inmates, as plain Crayon Creighton, which is my baptismal name, took passage for America to make it my home.

"I was favored in coming over by saving the clipper packet-ship from capture by the pirate, Sea Imp, and there was an American admiral on board to whom I stated my case, and he gained for me a special commission in the United States Navy, and purchasing from my own means, a schooner just built, I armed, equipped and manned her, and, by courtesy, Captain Creighton of the special cruiser Unknown, am now cruising for Orlando the Free Flag, with a very fair prospect of catching him before twelve hours have gone by.

"Am I any the less thought of because I am no longer an English noble, Miss Kathleen?"

"On the contrary, I prefer you as Captain Crayon Creighton an American nobleman."

It required all the will power that the young officer possessed to resist the temptation of kissing Kathleen right then and there.

But he resisted and accepted the hand offered him by Mrs. Kenneth who said:

"And I too regard you more highly, sir, while, be your motives what they may, I appreciate your giving up an empty title and inheritance, to win a deserved rank and fortune."

Pompey now announced refreshments, and after an hour's visit Captain Creighton took his leave, failing to notice in the darkness a cloaked form that stood by the library window.

As the officer walked away toward his boat, the cloaked form gazed after him a minute and then muttered aloud:

"There has been some dastard work on the part of Lord Kenmore; but yonder man is one of nature's noblemen, and he has accepted the situation with a grand courage."

"But he is on my track, and Lord Kenmore has sent him upon it—to kill me."

"Well, my Lord of Kenmore, you will have me to settle with, for I shall fly from the path of Captain Crayon Creighton as I would from an angel."

So saying the man strode away in the darkness, and that it was Orlando the Ocean Free Flag Rover the reader has recognized.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NIGHT COMBAT.

The morning dawned with the captains of the three American cruisers perfectly confident that they had Orlando the Free Flag Rover in a trap, and that before sunset he would be swing-

ing to the yard-arm in atonement for his many crimes.

The three-masted schooner, the cruiser Unknown, was anchored in the entrance to the inlet, with the sloop-of-war to starboard half a mile, and the brig-of-war to port.

Boats had been lowered from the two larger vessels, and the two columns were approaching the Unknown whose boats were already in line under their captain.

When the others came up, the little flotilla of fifteen boats, carrying in all two hundred men, and with one of the three cutters having a howitzer mounted in the bows, rushed into the inlet.

Captain Creighton going, in person, commanded, as he ranked the officers in the boats, and in three columns of five each, the attacking force entered the inlet.

It had been decided by the three captains that the pirate should be carried by boarding, so as to do no damage to his ship, and a doubt of failure was not to be entertained.

There stood upon the piazza watching the scene with interest, Mrs. Kenneth and Kathleen.

"But, where is the pirate vessel, mother, for we can see nearly all of the inlet?" said Kathleen.

Mrs. Kenneth did not know, and those in the boats were soon after in the same state of ignorance, for the Sea Rover's vessel was not to be seen.

He had scuttled his vessel was the first thought; but a planter who was on the shore hailed and told them that there was a little creek flowing into the inlet and a vessel could go up it, and, at high tide there was water enough to drag over into another inlet beyond, which led out to sea, three leagues up the coast.

The boats pushed up the creek, and groans of disappointment came when it was discovered that the Free Flag schooner had been taken through that way, for branches of trees sawed off, and logs pulled ashore showed that the pirates had worked their craft through what had appeared an impossible passageway.

That the cunning chief knew of this outlet was very evident, or he would never have run into what appeared a sure death-trap.

The boats of the sloop and brig returned at once, and the captains of those two vessels set off in pursuit, while Captain Creighton took matters more coolly, brought his beautiful vessel into the inlet to anchor, and had Mrs. Kenneth and Kathleen dine on board with him.

That night he set sail, and Kathleen was just sinking into a sweet sleep when she was startled by the roar of heavy guns.

The deep booming soon became incessant, and Kathleen and her mother, hastily dressing, went out upon the piazza, where the frightened servants also gathered.

There all beheld two vessels in action, or rather, one, a schooner firing rapidly upon a three-masted cruiser, which was sailing down upon her.

It was the Sea Imp and the Unknown.

The latter must have fired some shots, for the pirate was crippled in her rigging, but she was moving upon the Sea Imp now in silence, and so receiving her fearful broadsides.

From the position of both it seemed evident that the Unknown had been standing out to sea from the inlet, and the Sea Imp had been running in.

With the forest as a background, the Unknown had stripped herself of her sails, so could not be seen, and thus the pirate had run close upon her, until a broadside aimed at her rigging wholly had crippled her.

"Oh, why does Creighton not fire?" cried Kathleen, in alarm.

Her mother gave no answer, and soon the Unknown grappled with the crippled pirate, and the Americans boarded.

A savage, deadly combat at close quarters followed, and the flashing of firearms illuminated the scene.

Then came utter silence and darkness, and it was well for those who watched from the piazza of Sealaws that they gazed not upon the scene of the two vessels after action.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE STORY TOLD.

IN the cabin of the Unknown sat a man in irons, chained hands and feet.

It was Orlando, the Ocean Free Flag.

The decks of the Unknown were shattered and strewn with dead, while human hands were busy looking after the wounded.

Amidships were a group of men in irons—the pirates who had surrendered. They were few in number, for the Sea Rover had fought like a

tiger to the last, until he had met his match, never before found, and had been disarmed upon his own deck by Crayon Creighton!

Then he had been put in irons and taken to the cabin of his captor.

There Creighton soon joined him.

"You said that you had something to say to me?"

"Yes, Sir Crayon Kenmore."

"I have spared your life, would not fire upon your decks, because I wished to learn a secret from your lips; but I am not Sir Crayon Kenmore."

"You are, as I will prove to you."

"You cannot."

"I can, for Lord Kenmore has held converse with you and what he said caused you, a noble, honorable man, to give up your title."

"I gave up what I possessed no right to."

"Boy, listen to me and see what rights you hold. I will pain you by my words, but so be it.

"Let me tell you that I am the real Lord of Kenmore."

"You?"

"Yes, for my brother told you not the truth. I am two years his senior. I was kidnapped in childhood, as you shall hear," and the pirate related his story of how he had been made to suffer for his father's wrong—how he had been reared to outlawry, and his brother had thus succeeded to his title and estates."

Then he told of the wreck on the coast that night of storm, and just what Lord Kenmore had done, and all that followed.

"Now I have that to say which will gladden your heart that you took not my life."

"It was my son that he exchanged his daughter for, and you are that son."

"Great God, no!"

"I say yes, and the woman you love, Kathleen, is my brother's child, not mine; she is your own cousin."

"After you send me to the gallows you will be Lord of Kenmore, and in my cabin you will find full proofs of what I say."

"I believe you love Kathleen, and—"

"Does she, can she know you as you are?"

"No! and her noble mother has been the one star of hope and love in my reckless life. She knows me as a pirate, and she knows all that has made me so, while she is aware that I am not the cruel monster men paint me."

"I am a hard fighter, yes, and I have sinned, oh so greatly, but my crimes have been added to a thousand-fold by falsehoods."

"I was made a criminal as a boy, from a mad woman's revenge against my father. I was told by her who I was and knew all that I had lost."

"It made me a bitter man at heart, and I have been the Ocean Free Flag Rover—a terror upon the sea, but you have been the man to run me down at last, my son."

"Now lead me to the yard-arm!"

"God forbid that I should be so base. I shall set you free. When we anchor in the inlet, slip out of the stern ports, swim ashore and seek your wife."

"She will protect you until you can get away, and, long after, you can return to her home as Captain Kenneth. Heaven grant you forgiveness for the past, for, great indeed has been your suffering, as well as your sin."

"See, you are free! I give you my hand in farewell. Go not to the mansion until I have sent a note ashore to your noble wife telling her to secrete you."

"Heaven bless you—my son—my honored son!"

The irons were unlocked; then Crayon heartily grasped the chief's hand and left the cabin.

The two vessels moved into the inlet. The Unknown was anchored near the shore, and a boat was at once dispatched with a note addressed to Kathleen. It read:

"I have captured the buccaneer craft, Sea Imp, Orlando, the Free Flag Rover, captain. Will breakfast fast with you if I have your consent."

Within was a note to Mrs. Kenneth. It read:

"I know all. He is unharmed, and will escape to the shore and be at the pavilion in the cedars."

"Arrange to hide him until he can escape, and some day return as Captain Kenneth to your own home."

CREIGHTON."

Kathleen returned a note urging her lover to come to breakfast, and Mrs. Kenneth, pleading fatigue, retired to her room.

An hour after, in a secret chamber of the mansion, Orlando found a hiding-place.

Creighton came to breakfast at Sealawns, and brought with him the captains of the sloop and brig, who, having heard the firing, had sailed

to the scene, only to congratulate the victor upon his victory.

The escape of Orlando none could account for. It was said by the prisoners that their chief had been terribly wounded, and if he attempted to swim ashore, he had been drowned, and so that was set down as his end, with many regrets that he had escaped the yard-arm.

During the day Creighton sought an interview with Mrs. Kenneth, *his mother!*

She told him of her happy girlhood on her father's plantation, and how she had met and loved Orlando Kenneth, who claimed to be an officer of the Texan Navy.

She had become his wife, and then had learned the fearful truth, yet would not desert him, for she loved him still, as he was all gentleness and devotion to her.

She had hoped some day to win him back to honor and duty. In her long illness he had nursed her as tenderly as a woman would have done, and when she had told him of Kathleen's love for him, Creighton, he had told her the truth about the exchange of the children, and she had been at once drawn toward the young officer the more as her own son, while Kathleen held a daughter's place in her fond heart.

Orlando had pledged her that when the two had wedded his evil career should end forever, and she had lived on in hope, and had come to America.

It was a painful, touching scene, the interview between mother and son, and when the latter had said:

"Mother, we must redeem him," the loving, long-suffering wife had breathed a fervent:

"Amen!"

That night a sailor messenger was dispatched by Captain Creighton as a courier with dispatches to catch the north-bound mail-coach. He was mounted upon one of the fleetest horses in the Sealawns stables. No one saw him depart, other than the young captain, and the negro stableman. Had others seen him they would never have known in the bearded horseman in sailor costume Orlando, the Ocean Rover.

The Unknown and her prize sailed as soon as repairs on the Sea Imp were completed, for New York, and the young captain won deserved fame for his capture of Orlando, the Ocean Free Flag. He was again sent pirate-hunting to win new laurels, as he did.

A year after the Unknown dropped anchor in Sealawns Harbor, and the grand old mansion was resplendent with lights to greet him.

The master, Captain Kenneth, had returned home some months before, and the quiet, dignified, courtly man, gentle as a woman toward every one, had become very popular with all.

He was wholly devoted to his wife and child, as they were to him.

He was content to end his days in the quiet of Sealawns, and find a last resting-place in the little graveyard over among the pines, where lay the ashes of three generations of the former owners of the fine old estate.

Captain Kenneth welcomed the young captain cordially, and told him that the guests had arrived and the clergyman and bride were in waiting, for it was the night set for the wedding of Crayon Creighton and Kathleen Kenneth.

And a joyous wedding it was, and Sealawns rung with music, tripping feet and merry voices, until the dawn of day.

And with the handsome young captain, whose story was known that he had thrown away the title of Lord of Kenmore and the vast estates thereby attached to become an American citizen, the stern-faced but courtly master of Sealawns shared the honors, for men and women, too, seemed strangely drawn toward him for some reason.

But had they known the truth, that the master of Sealawns was once known as Orlando the Ocean Free Flag, what curses would have been heaped upon him!

That dread secret the beautiful Kathleen never knew any more than she did that Crayon was her cousin, and that she had been born in Castle Kenmore.

THE END.

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